IN CHRIST JESUS

Raoul Plus S.J.

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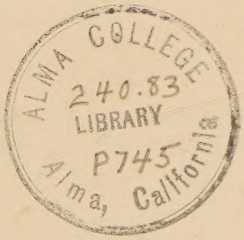
IN CHRIST JESUS

In Christ Jesus

By Raoul Plus, S.J.

Revised and Corrected Edition

Translated by Peter Addison



London
Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd.
Publishers to the Holy See
1926

45742

NIHIL OBSTAT:

INNOCENTIUS APAP, S. TH.M., O.P.
Censor deputatus.

IMPRIMATUR:

EDM. CAN. SURMONT,
Vicarius generalis.

WESTMONASTERII,
die 27 Augusti, 1923.

First printed - *November*, 1923
Second impression *May*, 1926

Made and Printed in Great Britain

To

THE READERS OF "GOD IN US,"

THAT THEY MAY BETTER UNDERSTAND AND FEEL
THE PART PLAYED BY JESUS CHRIST
IN OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

INTRODUCTION

IN Christo Jesu, "In Christ Jesus." This occurs with greater frequency than any other formula in the New Testament: one hundred and sixty-four times in St Paul, and twenty-four times in St John. In the whole of Christian dogma there is no more expressive formula, and none is less understood, more particularly in its deeper aspects.

Of Christ we know his thirty-three years of life on earth, his silent existence in the tabernacle, that is all.

There is another life of Christ, which is not known, and which we should like to make known, or at least to make better known.

What is that other life of Christ ? . . .

One day Saul of Tarsus was going to Damascus to persecute Christians; a light overwhelmed him on the way, and a voice from above cried to him, " I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.'

What is this ? Who is this Jesus ? Paul is persecuting the Christians, but what can he do against Christ crucified months ago and ascended to heaven ?

However, the voice which cannot deceive said, " I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest."

" Christ " and " Christians," are they then the same thing ?

Yes, surely The Christians whom Saul persecuted, they are Jesus.

It is of *that* Jesus, *of the Jesus we are*, that we wish to speak. Too few people know that he exists.

It is said *Christianus alter Christus*, "the Christian is another Christ," and nothing is more true; but one should not misunderstand it. "Other" here does not mean "different." We are not a Christ different from the true Christ; we are, by calling, Christ, the only one who exists, the unique Christ: *Christus facti sumus*, as St Augustine says; we have not to become anything else but him; we have to become *him*.

How, and in what measure and with what results, we will try to indicate: that is the object of this book.

Doubtless a very audacious doctrine. The audacity is not ours, but that of the inspired text, of the Church which gives and interprets it to us, of the Fathers who have so many times used it, and in the last analysis of someone well enough qualified to know it, perhaps, of the Master himself, the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

We shall not be able from the beginning to set forth our texts, which will be given as they occur during the course of the work. Everyone will remember the principal ones. Not that we are ignorant of them, but perhaps we do not get out of them quite all that we should for our practical daily life.

The Christian only makes one with Jesus. Jesus is not "all himself" without us. He is not all himself if we are not one with him. Incorporated with him, we form an integral part of his total unity.

Hence follows this: making only one with Jesus, we make, united to Jesus, one amongst ourselves.

In order to be complete, therefore, this work ought to have two parts. One might, indeed, consider our incorporation with Christ—

Either from the point of view of the relation of *each* Christian *with Jesus Christ*,

Or from the point of view of the relations of all the members of Christ *with each other*.

In the first case it is the problem of the true nature of the individual Christian life; by the fact that we are one with Jesus Christ, the life of each one of us must be Jesus Christ: *mihi vivere Christus est.* That subject alone will be the theme of the present volume.

In the second case it is a question of the true nature of the Church, or, we may say, of the Communion of Saints. By the fact that we are all united to Christ Jesus we together form but one body, the mystic body of Christ: *unum corpus sumus in Christo.* We will deal with this beautiful subject later on.

No one must look for a scheme of spirituality here. Our aim is rather to insist on that which constitutes the foundation of all spirituality.

In the "Father's house there are many mansions." This one chooses for his guiding virtue poverty or humility or charity, and all that with the finest gradations. Another will take as the motive of his asceticism such and such a doctrinal truth: the Eucharistic dogma, for instance, or the Sacred Heart, or the imitation of Christ, or the Virgin in this or that Mystery. One is led to accentuate views of a practical order and another those of a speculative order. We never find two Religious Orders free from at least differences of detail, any more than you will find two souls going to God by absolutely identical attractions.

Leaving aside the very real diversity of detail, which reveals the incomparable richness of the Church of God, we must not forget the common point of origin, more or less apparent, but everywhere necessarily existent—that is to say, the whole of the dogmatic varieties—whence flow all particular spiritualities. Whatever the profundity or the variety or the extent of the wells whence the different spiritual schools draw their waters, the spring from which these schools are finally replenished is ONE: "the spring which gushes forth to eternal life."

St Teresa, like St Gertrude and St Margaret Mary, is a companion of the Samaritan. All the masters of the spiritual life throughout the centuries have been familiar with the symbolic kerb where the living water springs forth.

There is only one Jacob's well in the world.

St Paul, speaking of a subject quite different from ours, in the thirteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians, reproaches the new converts with proclaiming themselves followers, this one of Apollo, that one of Paul; thus accentuating different points of view, instead of seeing beyond Apollo and Paul the only person who matters, Jesus Christ.

All idea of blame is untimely here too. Let us keep only this fundamental theme: the only foundation is CHRIST JESUS.

Many pamphlets and essays recently published have made known to the public Dominican and Bernardine, Ignatian, Benedictine, and Sulpician spirituality, and there is only profit to be drawn from such reading and the enriching comparisons which it suggests.

While we heartily approve of these works, which thus bring out the specific character of the different spiritualities and the different methods adopted and piously guarded by each school or religious family, we would, for our part, like to recall that underlying the different tendencies, spiritual life, all spiritual life, is only CHRISTIAN life perfected. It consists essentially in leading, with as little waste as possible, and in the way which each individual finds most fruitful, the full LIFE IN CHRIST.

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IN CHRIST JESUS

BOOK I

THE FACT OF OUR INCORPORATION WITH JESUS CHRIST

Chapter I

ITS PROCLAMATION

I. *To save us Jesus makes us Christs.*
II. *The true idea of the fulness of Christ.*

I

"DO you forget that I am the daughter of your king?" exclaimed Louise de France, in a fit of temper,[1] one day to her governess.

"And," answered her attendant, "do you forget that I am the daughter of your God?"

At this unexpected reminder of the divine origins of the humblest of us the irritable child was at once appeased.

Every soul in a state of grace is a "daughter of God," and the voices could find no better way of stimulating Joan of Arc than that of repeating this heavenly word:

"Go, Daughter of God! Go! Go!"

A heavenly word, indeed, summing up all our vocations.

"You must not think," said a great bishop, "that God is jealous of the title of God, that he takes care to keep it for himself only, and that he delights in a single 'press proof' of his divinity."[2]

Quite the contrary. In creating man, God thinks of making him divine. But, treating him as a free being, he

[1] Later on she entered a Carmelite convent to make reparation for the sins of her father, Louis XV.

[2] Mgr. Pertaud.

does not force the supernatural upon him; he allows Adam to be his own master, to refuse or accept, for his greatest good or detriment.

" It has pleased me to come freely, and of my pure goodness, to dwell in thee and in everyone born of thee; it has pleased me to create thee, thee and thy descendants, a hundred, a thousand times greater than nature; out of a human person, committed to purely human acts, it has pleased me to make of thee a being of divine essence. But that thou mayest know that thou art not ' God,' of thine own doing, and in no otherwise but by me, I do exact of thee a formal act of submission to my infinite and only majesty. I anoint thee divine, if thou dost confess that I alone am the true God."

At times we misunderstand or misinterpret the original testing, reducing it to a simple caprice, ridiculous or childish enough, on the part of the Most High. It is very different in fact.

Nothing is juster, more normal or in line with the nature of God and that of man; of God who is infinite, of man who is free.

Alas ! instead of obedience, revolt.

Such refusal by the " finite " to acknowledge the unique superiority of the infinite involved all the descendants of Adam and Eve in the loss of the gift of infinity, which God gave as a wedding gift to the first human pair.

Man, by his unwillingness to recognize all that he had received from a Greater, lost his true greatness; from a being " of divine essence " he became a Godless creature.

Such a supernatural loss seems to us a small matter. When it is a question of gauging divine measures, our human methods fail utterly. We are so terribly limited.

But God understands measuring the divine. How he appreciates this divine that man has lost !

To the point of achieving miracles in order to restore it to man.

The Word, one must believe it, is the wisdom of the Father; he must know how to give reality its true value. The Word will decide to give everything back to us.

The *Supernatural Creation* was already a glory.

The *Supernatural Restoration*, by the coming on earth of the Word made flesh, will make another glory.

But we have a third, more wonderful yet perhaps than the other two, though unfortunately less known; and that is *the means chosen by the incarnate Word* to make us heirs of the supernatural riches restored to us by his sacrifice.

And it is the main object of this book to bring out in all its fulness this third miracle of love.

Our Lord could quite well pay for us, while excluding us from himself. He could have said to his Father: "Your glory has been attacked by mankind. This glory I am going to return to you through my sacrifice. How much is necessary? Here it is. Henceforward, restore your gifts to them." It is as though some such penalty were proposed in substitution of an insolvent debtor in an occupied country during the war. Before, as after, there are no more than two strangers, two friends. This charity has not, however, set up between the two interested parties a bond as of a true family, with the same blood in their veins.

But it is not at all thus that the Saviour has saved us. He was not satisfied with putting the amount required down on the counter. "I take their place and pay for them." No. He said to his Father: "I make them mine. Not only will they be mine, but in a sense they will be myself, they will become a part of me."

For here is pre-eminently the "*Mystery*." It was not enough for our Lord that he became one amongst us. *He has made each of us something of himself.*

When St Paul speaks of the *Mystery*,[1] it is of that he speaks. And this Mystery, he says, this gift above all gifts, that he,

[1] Eph. iii 4, 5, 10, 18; Col. i 26.

Paul, has learned by divine revelation, which no prince of this world has known,[1] and the depths of which, until the coming of the Saviour, the very powers and principalities of heaven had not fathomed—this Mystery must be made plain to all eyes.[2]

Let us follow the advice of the Apostle.

During the three years of his apostolic ministry our Lord had concealed the miraculous. How, then, with their torpid apprehension of things divine, could the twelve disciples have understood ? But the Saviour is to go away. He has but a few hours to spend with them. The moment has come to deliver to them the pith of his Gospel.

As ever, our Lord has recourse to a comparison.

During their travels across Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, the group of Apostles had frequently seen the lovely Oriental trellises, heavy with many branches, all radiant in the sunshine on the crumbling stone walls.,

" I am as one of these luscious vines; *I am the vine* par excellence, *and my Father the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he takes away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purges that it may bring forth more fruit. . . . As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me.*"

And our Lord, so that there may be no mistake and that his words may get home, again lays stress on the same conception.

" *I am the vine: you the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing. If anyone abide not in me, he shall be cast forth as a branch and shall wither; and then they shall gather him up and cast him into the fire and he burneth. . . . In this is my Father glorified: that you bring forth very much fruit.*"

St Paul but slightly modifies this similitude: " We have been grafted on Christ."[3] Christ is the olive tree on which

[1] 1 Cor. ii 7, 10. [2] Eph. iii 9, 10. Rom. vi 5.

we have to be grafted to become partakers of the root's rich sap, to become, in untranslatable language, " partaker of the root and of the fatness of the olive tree."[1]

The Apostle, moreover, is not in difficulties. In each letter he finds a fresh similitude.[2]

The most characteristic is that of the human body.

" *As the body is one and hath many members; and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body; so also is Christ. The body also is not one member, but many.*

" *You are the body of Christ, and you are the members, each in his way.*"[3]

Again, to the Corinthians Paul said:

" *Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ? . . . He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.*"[4]

Throughout the whole of his letter to the Christians of Ephesus the Apostle is dominated, one might say wholly so, by this idea. The doctrine which he has received, the mission of teaching, is that God has given Christ as Head to the Church, which is his body and his complement; and that all, Jews and Gentiles, are joined together in Christ in one single *body*.[5]

And, interpolating another metaphor in his text, St Paul exclaims:

" *You are no longer strangers . . . but very members of the family of God, built as you are on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, of whom Jesus Christ is the corner stone.*

[1] *Socius radicis et pinguedinis olivæ*, Rom. xi 17. Read verses 17-24. It is hardly our place here to emphasize the derivation of St Paul's doctrine from the preaching of our Lord. Let it suffice to refer the reader to the decisive article of P. Prat, *St Paul et le Paulinisme*, in the *Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique*.

[2] The epistles of the captivity above all are principally concerned with the intimate union of Christians with Christ.

[3] 1 Cor. xii 12-27. [4] 1 Cor. vi 15-18.

[5] The mystery of Christ requires two plans: Firstly, it is the union of the Jews who believe in the Saviour Jesus with this divine Redeemer; and, secondly, the extension, even to the non-Jews—to the " Gentiles "—of this adorable mercy.

It is in him that the whole well-ordered building arises and forms a holy temple in the Lord. . . ."

From all these testimonies—and numberless allusions in the Epistles and in St John—this idea stands out very clearly:

In order to save us Christ has not only paid for us. Not only has he thrown over us a kind of protective garment, in imitation of an example given in his own words in a certain place, the action of the hen gathering her little ones under her wings.

He has done much more. He has *incorporated* us with him; he has *grafted* and *inserted* us into himself; he has made of us, poor scattered pebbles, the stones of a great building, but of an *organic and living building*, of which he is become the living corner stone.

The same idea is ever coming out under different similitudes, and it is vital that we thoroughly acquaint ourselves with it.

To save us, our Lord did not *substitute* himself for us while leaving us separated from him. He has made us *one with him*, uniting himself to us intimately and essentially. So much is it thus that when the Father looks on one of the redeemed, he sees him as " something of Jesus." When he looks on Jesus, he sees him with all the redeemed hanging on him.

The last of the little leaves which quiver down there on the far end of the branches is a part of the living vine; so that, separated from the trunk, it is not in the dust, and the sap reaches it.

The very least of the stones of the building, provided that the wind or rain have not dislodged it and made it fall, can boast of the splendours of the building.

And the smallest phalanx of the little finger, so long as it is not cut off in a moment of frenzy or forgetfulness, partakes of the life of the whole organism.

It is thus that the image of a great Jesus Christ presents

itself. Christ in his fulness, the whole Christ, as St Augustine says, both one and many; who embraces *the Christ*, son of the Virgin and well-beloved of the Father—and then all of us *made Christs*, men become Christs so as to become again divine.

Do we begin to catch a glimpse of "*the hidden Mystery*," this grand scheme of God for saving all men by *identifying* them with his well-beloved Son?

II

With recollection, let us attempt to go a little further.

This, then, is the predominant thought: Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ in his fulness, *himself* AND *ourselves*.

And that is impossible unless he makes *our* life *his* and *his* life *ours*.

Is such a pretension admissible?

It can be and should be.

To begin with, *we ourselves live in him*.

Witness the eloquent barbarisms of the Apostle. With Christ we are dead: *commortui;*[1] buried with him: *consepulti;*[2] raised up together: *conresuscitati;*[3] with him we live: *convivemus;*[4] with him we reign in heaven.[5] With him we henceforth sit on the right of the Father.[6] With him, says St Matthew in conclusion, we shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel.[7] And St Augustine, commenting upon Psalm lxxiv, *Cum accepero tempus ego justitias judicabo*, "At the end of time, I will judge justices," makes use of this text to point out that in the *ego* of the Psalm Christ must be seen whole, the members with the Head.[8]

Jesus in his turn dwells in *each of us;* he dwells in the poor man,[9] in the captive,[10] in the needy.[11]

[1] 2 Tim. ii 11. [2] Rom. vi 4. [3] Eph. ii 6. [4] 2 Tim. ii 11.
[5] 2 Tim. ii 12. [6] Eph. ii 16. [7] Matt. xxix 28.
[8] In Ps. lxxiv, No. 5; in Ps. xlix, No. 8; *De Civitate Dei*, lib. xx, c. v.
[9] Matt. x 42. [10] Matt. xxv 36. [11] Matt. xxv 36-42.

It is he who suffers persecution in us; we have recalled the crucial texts from the Acts.[1]

Through our sufferings he completes in us what is lacking to his Passion.[2] It is he who fights[3] in us, he who triumphs.[4]

Translating for the use of the faithful the words of the Apostle, St John Chrysostom unhesitatingly says: "From Jesus, from pagans, from slaves, behold us become . . . What then? Angels? No. Walking Christs, other Jesuses."[5]

Thus one has two corresponding realities: all that Jesus did, he did not do alone; we worked it out with him and in him. All that each Christian does, he does not do it alone; Christ works it out with him and in him.

Christ and Christians are one and cannot be divided. There where Christ willed to act or to suffer, each Christian by a glorious anticipation became his associate. There where Christians act or suffer, Christ in his turn takes part, whether rejoicing or suffering.

Hence these formulas, which at first sight are so astonishing, but which upon reflection become clear: as Christians we died on Calvary, arose from the dead on Easter day, ascended to heaven at the Ascension.[6] By anticipation doubtless, but very really, in the person of him with whom we make but "one."—"God hath made us alive with Christ," says St Paul; "hath raised us up and made us to sit in heavenly places with Christ."—"When Christ ascended to heaven, not only were we confirmed in our right to possess Paradise, but *we entered it with Christ.*"[7]

[1] Acts ix 4.
[2] Col. i 24.
[3] Col. i 29.
[4] Col. i 24.
[5] *Qui prius erat Judæus, et ethnicus, aut servus, obambulat formam gestans non Angeli, nec Archangeli, sed universorum Domini, in sese Christum representans.* Quoted by Bellevue, *l'Œuvre du Saint Esprit ou la sanctification des Ames*, p. 622.
[6] This will be emphasized further on. Here I give only a general plan.
[7] St Leo the Great.

Such was *our* rôle in *Jesus;* this is *our rôle in Jesus now.*

Does pain come upon us, Christians in grace ? It is Christ who suffers in us. The martyrs did not doubt. St Felicity, from her prison in Carthage, clearly affirms that in the hour of her trial Christ will be in her and suffer for her, because she herself is going to suffer for him. Relating the martyrdom of the Deacon Sanctus, the churches of Vienne and of Lyons hold the same language: " His whole body was one wound, but Christ, who suffered in him, showed that nothing is difficult when there is love of the Father."

The voice of the doctors echoes to that of the saints. St Augustine first: " The church suffered in Christ when he suffered for her; Christ in his turn suffered for the Church when she suffered for him."

We have chosen the case of pain. We must generalize. Every act of a Christian in grace may be regarded as the act of Christ. Do we offer prayer to God ? Jesus prays with us: he prays in us. His prayer is ours, our prayer is his. " When we speak of the prayer of Jesus Christ," observes St Augustine, whom we should often invoke, because after St Paul and St John no one has better understood and explained our incorporation in the Saviour, " that may mean *either* the prayer which Jesus pronounced in person *or* our own prayer as Christians, but that makes *only one prayer*, for the head and the body of Christ make such a *unity* that the parts are inseparable."[1]

Do we exercise *humility ?* Our humility is joined with that of Jesus in his great mysteries of self-effacement: the incarnation, the washing of the feet, the Eucharist . . ., together making with it a single and unique humility, that of the whole Christ, who continues through us and in us to offer

[1] *Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum plerumque loqui ex se, ex persona sua, quod est caput nostrum; plerumque ex persona corporis sui, quod sumus nos; sed ita quasi ex unius hominis ora sonare verba ut intelligamus caput et corpus in unitate integritatis consistere, nec separare ab invicem.—In Ps. xl.*

to his Father the homage of creation, putting himself in his true place.

Do we practise *poverty?* That poverty is one with the poverty of the manger, and the innumerable deprivations of the Saviour Jesus: Nazareth, the flight into Egypt, the austerities of the public life, where he has not a stone on which to lay his head. . . . And all that makes up a *one and only* poverty, that of the *whole* Christ, proclaiming to the Father contempt for the elusive wealth of this world.

Do we practise *recollection?* This meditation will be joined to that of the Master in the solitude of the forty days, or of the three hours on the cross; and this double meditation, his and ours, is welded into one unique meditation, that of the *whole* Christ, thus asserting the value of silence and the price of adoration.

Are we consumed with *zeal?* Our devotion for souls throws itself like a streamlet into the powerful river of the devotion of Jesus. Our sweat, and if God wills martyrdom, our drops of blood, mingle with his blood. And all these currents form a unique torrent of generosity, which, proceeding from the *whole* Christ, seeks to cover up the indifferences and the vilenesses, victoriously to encircle the islets of inertia, to carry down cowardice and weakness to the far-away oceans, in order to free the world from them.

In a like manner it would be well to set forth each virtue in detail. But we have done enough: we have examined the beginnings.

For God there is only one person in the world able to praise him as he wills, only one who prays, only one who is recollected, only one who is poor, only one who is devoted: *Jesus Christ.* But beneath this word *Jesus Christ* must be understood *all Jesus Christ*, the head and the members, and—although in singularly different senses—every sort of man (in a state of grace) as well as the Son of Man, and every human being (in a state of grace) as well as the Redeemer of the human race.

In himself, then, Jesus has comprehended and does comprehend all of us. *In us* Jesus has his continuity and perfection.

And so intimate is this union between Christ and Christians that sometimes the expression " Christ " means " Christ only," sometimes " Christ *and* Christians," and what at first sight appeared to be applicable only to one *or* the other of these two facts may be used indifferently with reference to either of them, both of them being subject to identical workings.

It will, of course, be always permissible to treat of our Lord solely from the point of view of his individual physical being, and as such in no need of being added to. But he may also be considered as head of redeemed humanity, and as such exacting our completion of him. And we see how this second point of view enlarges our devotion.

In our Lord there are two aspects. He is no more, and he goes on. He has finished, and he perseveres. He is *perfect*, and he wills *to be still more perfect*.

He came down amongst us and must ascend again to his Father. He departs. For ever, think you ? Yes, and yet he remains. He leaves us and we have the Ascension. He remains and we have the Eucharist, and the two are quite compatible.

He dies on Calvary and his sacrifice is fully accomplished. He himself asserts it. " I have finished my work. There is nothing more to be done." And yet on the evening before he gave the Apostles power to prolong the Cross and go on with Calvary. *Consummatum est*, and here is the sacrifice of Golgotha. " Do this in memory of me," and you have the sacrifice of the Mass. At Golgotha nothing more was lacking. Without the Mass the Cross lacked something.

Christ suffered the Passion and suffered it to the last drop. What suffering could be added thereto ? *None*.

Yet by our own individual sufferings we must *complete* the sufferings of Christ.

And so at each step two points of view are distinguishable in the Master's teaching. Now he is proclaimed to us as the only one, the Son who is the only Son, the only well-beloved, the only-begotten of the Father.[1] Now he will be called no longer the only, but the first-born; *primogenitus*, the first amongst the brethren. And in truth he fulfils equally both titles: he is the only, and he is the first. At times in the Holy Scriptures it is Christ of the earthly life, Christ of history, Christ the son of Mary, the Galilean, poverty-stricken, crucified, a clear, well-finished presentment, with whom we are concerned. At other times we are in the presence of Christ in the life of souls, of Christ ascended to heaven and living on through his Spirit in every Christian in a state of grace, who from the Head may grow endlessly in proportion to divine predestination and according to the fervour of each.

And such a Christ we have no right to leave in the background. We trust that the following pages will help to throw light on him.

CHAPTER II

ITS BEARING

I. *Legal or moral bond?—mystic bond.*
II. *The mediation of Christ.*

I

THE announcement seems to be clear; it is based on innumerable assertions.

But to what point has Christ made us one with his own being? to what point has he made of us something of himself?

If one takes the expression *literally*, is it not *blasphemous?* If one takes it *metaphorically*, is it anything more than a meaningless *phrase?*

[1] *Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te.*

The expression should be taken literally, and it is not blasphemy.

Evidently, when we read " the body of the justified becomes the flesh of the crucifix,"[1] it is not to be understood that the regenerate man becomes *physically* a part of the *physical* body of Christ. That would be a gross error.

Should one conclude it is only a question between Christ and us of a purely and exclusively moral union, in the sense, for instance, of the union between the members of a society; or, what is less still, of a uniquely legal bond—or what is exteriorly reputed to be so—for instance, following the proclamation: " It will be henceforth established that I consider you something of my being. In reality, nothing of the sort exists; but it will be so understood, since I declare before my Father that you are mine, and that he must regard us, you and me, as making only one."

Is our Lord satisfied with that ? No. He did a great deal more. He effected a concrete and supernatural union with us—quasi-*physical* some will say—a union of an absolutely special kind, and which, for lack of a clearer word, we call *mystic* union,[2] which must be understood thus: the true formula of our incorporation into Jesus Christ is not " everything happens *as if* we made only one with him," nor even, " I take them *under my protection.* I make them my property, my chattels. I am pleased to attach them to my person as an appurtenance of my own being."

The true formula of our incorporation with Jesus Christ is this: " We are one *in all reality* with him."[3]

[1] St Leo, *Serm.* xiv, *de Passione.*

[2] Mystic has here not at all the sense which is given to it, for example, in the expression " *mystic phenomena.*" In the case of incorporation, *mystic* signifies our *normal* relation with Jesus Christ, the supernatural life *common* to every Christian soul. In the second and more limited acceptation of the word it specifies a special and relatively rare form of that same life. We regret to have to use the same word for designating two mysterious but very different realities.

[3] Reality, " veritable reality, since it is the subject of attribu-

Let us examine the comparison of our Lord: " I am the vine, you the branches;" or, again, that of St Paul: " We are grafted on Christ." " Christ is the olive tree on which one must be grafted in order to participate in the rich sap of the root "; the sap which rises in the grafted stem is certainly more than a " juridic or moral " claim.

If one takes up the comparison of body and members in detail, as do the Apostles in many places—four times at least explicitly—and develops it together with its rich variety of application, it is impossible to admit that the life[1] should be purely metaphoric which circulates in an organism such as he describes, and puts head and members into communication with each other, as well as the members between themselves.

On this point the doctors and great ascetics of the Church have never had the slightest doubt.

" Members of Christ, we are his flesh and his bones," cried St Ambrose. " Salvation is to be with Christ, to enter into the unity of his body—there, there is no stain, no trace of sin."[2]

There are innumerable passages from St Augustine, and they are only to be understood in their literal sense.

" Head and body, one whole, one only Jesus, two in one flesh, in one voice, in one passion, and, the trial over, in one rest."[3]

" Christ has incorporated us in himself, he has made us his members. In him we are become Christ, we are very really his body; in him we are dependents of Christ: *Christi*

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tion, of properties, and of rights. Mystic is not the opposite of real, and there are realities outside of those which can be touched and weighed."—Prat, *Théologie de St Paul*, i 417.

[1] How significant is the passage in Col. ii 19, and " not holding the head, from which the whole body, by joints and bands, being supplied with nourishment and compacted, groweth into the increase of God."

[2] St Ambrose in Ps. xxxix 12.

[3] *Unus homo, cum capite et corpore suo, Jesus Christus, salvator corporis et membra corporis; duo in carne una, et in voce una, et in passione una, et cum transierit iniquitas, in requie una.*—Aug. *in Ps. lxxi* 4.

sumus": better still "*Christus sumus*—not only *of* Christ, but we *are* Christ."[1]

The assertion is too clear to admit of any ambiguity.

After the bishop, the recluse. After Augustine, Catherine of Siena: the great mystic beside the great doctor. Nowhere can we find more striking commentaries on the similitude between the vine and the branches.

To Brother William of England, Augustinian monk, she writes:

"I, the slave of the servants of the Son of God, exhort you in his precious blood"—we know that this was the customary phrase employed by the saint—"with the desire of seeing you transformed in his ineffable charity, to the end that we who are sterile and uncultivated trees may be grafted on the tree of life. We will then bear well-flavoured fruits, not by ourselves, but by the Master of the grace which is in us. . . .

"In order that we may not be separated from you, O incarnate Word, you have willed to graft yourself on our nature, and you have done this in sowing your Word in the fruitful womb of Mary; it is very true that the soul lives by you.

". . . O Father, let us attach ourselves to the fruitful tree, that the Master be not lifted up without us.

". . . I end by imploring you to be ever united to the divine tree and transformed in Jesus crucified."[2]

To Brother Nicholas, Olivetan of Florence, she again writes:

"A God and grafted on our flesh, a God made man, and we are not astonished! O sweet and kind grafting! Man was sterile because he did not participate in that fruit-bearing sap of grace. Let us learn to desire to profit by this holy grafting, and to attach ourselves to this trunk, which

[1] *Concorporans nos sibi, ut in illo Christus essemus.*—Aug. *in Ps. xxvi, enarr. ii* 2.

[2] *Lettres*, Ed. Cartier, 1886, iii, Let. 174.

alone ripens true virtues; wood gashed with gaping wounds, Son of God, incarnate Word."[1]

In the ordinary grafting it is the trunk which is uncultivated. For St Paul it is the branch, but this inexactness does not matter. The Apostle was not scrupulous about scientific precision. Under the imperfectly handled comparison, the perfectly clear thought appears.

Neither has he any literary scruple; images succeed each other and override each other, sometimes incomprehensibly mixed up. The idea with the writer of the *Epistles* is so entirely all, it comes to him with such force, he possesses it so completely, or rather is possessed by it so utterly, that it rushes out of his soul, filtering through every crevice in its way, absorbs every means of expression which presents itself, eager to expand and become a torrent for carrying conviction with irresistible impetus.

[1] *Lettres*, vol. ii, cxxvi. Compare the prayer of the saint composed in Rome, Wednesday, March 3, 1379:

" O Eternal Trinity, Almighty God, we are trees of death and you the tree of life. Infinite God, what a spectacle to behold in your light the tree of your creature. You have drawn from yourself, O Supreme Purity, its pure and innocent soul, and you united it to a body made of clay. You gave as branches to that tree the powers of the soul. . . .

" Woe is me, that tree was separated from innocence through sin; become a tree of death, it could only bear poisoned fruits. But you, Eternal Trinity, you loved your creature madly, and when you saw that the tree could only produce fruits of death, being separated from you who are life, you saved it by that same love which led you to create it; you grafted your divinity on the lost tree of our humanity. O good and beneficent grafting, you mingled your sweetness with our bitterness, splendour with darkness, wisdom with folly, life with death, the infinite with the finite.

" After the injury which your creature did to you, what forced you to this union which restores our life? It is love, love alone, and that wonderful grafting has vanquished death.

" But that did not suffice. You wished to water that tree with your own blood, and that blood by its virtue makes the tree fruitful from the moment that man consents to unite himself with and to live in you. . . ." (*Dialogue*, trad. Cartier, 1884, pp. 528-530.)

With the comparison of the *human body* St Paul combines without effort sometimes the metaphor of the *grafted plant*, sometimes again that of the *building*.

"All the faithful, united in Christ, form an *edifice*, that being *rooted* and founded in charity, *erected* on the foundations of the Apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as *corner stone*, built up together by the Holy Ghost to be the dwelling place of God."[1] The Church is a body and it is a house. The body grows, the house is built, or the body is edified.[2]

Each of the comparisons has its advantages. The edifice shows the solidity of the whole; grafting, our root dependence on Jesus Christ; the body, the fact that our union with our Lord is a living and vital union. These last two, at any rate, and the fact that they are used together in the comparison of the edifice—in itself a dead image—together with ideas of the root and of the body—living things—surely points to the fact that what is in question is a perfectly real and vital communication between Christ and ourselves, and thus the two words, *chief* and *head*, must be taken in the full sense of the Latin *caput*—that is to say, with the idea of superiority, of command, but especially with the more important idea of generating influx and of preserving life.[3]

Doubtless comparison is not reasoned explanation. It is often false. There is sometimes more truth in an image than in the idea by itself;[4] in the image the idea is made both living and assimilable.

[1] Eph. iii 11, 17.

[2] *In ædificationem corporis Christi* (Eph. iv 12).

[3] Regarding this the Council of Trent is very clear. "As the head commands its members, as the vine penetrates all the branches with its sap, so Christ Jesus exercises his influence on *all* the just at *each moment*; it is that influence which precedes, accompanies, and crowns their good works and makes them agreeable to God and meritorious in his sight" (Sess. vi, Can. xvi).

[4] Often, not always: the image sometimes may obscure the clarity of an idea, not because it is an image, but because it is not perfectly adapted to the idea which it tries to interpret. The

Our Lord loved to speak in images: he knew how to speak to men.

"I am come to bring *fire* on earth," "The harvest is white," "I am the *light*," "I am the *way*," "I am the *door*," "The *water* which springs up to life eternal. . . ." Some of these metaphors are so identified with the exposition of dogma, penetrate its web so profoundly, that one would not be able to detach them without tearing out shreds of the dogma itself in the effort.[1]

Fr. Prat notes that we should adhere as closely as possible to these metaphors of the grafting, of the building, and of the human body. Let us not seek, then, a symbolic sense under the strange force of the words. "No, it must be taken quite literally."[2]

II

This, then, is Christ's chief function. He is *par excellence* the mediator, "the one who is in the middle." Placed between God and man, he encompasses all divinity and unites to himself all humanity, the neck of an immense hour glass.

In the upper part *God*, infinite life.

This infinite life contained and, as it were, gathered up in this unique and central personage *Jesus Christ*.

Then, in the lower part, *humanity*, unworthy humanity, attached to Jesus Christ by the vital bond of sanctifying grace, which has again become our inheritance; unworthy humanity, which of old revolted against God, but which Christ, the

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general principle remains true. After an abstract explanation, which evidently no one has understood, it happens that the explanation takes a concrete form which makes it clear.

[1] D'Alès, *Etudes*, vol. cxxxv, p. 172, "Le dogme catholique de la rédemption."

[2] This just observation is Blondel's *L'action*, p. 422. He adds: "Have we reflected upon the strange power of grafting? Several living cells grafted on the stock suffice for a physiological revolution, which renews the sap of the wild stock, and suddenly by a natural magic replaces sterility by fecundity. So the insertion of a thought of faith in our interior and a sacramental operation reform and transfigure the functions of nature."

New Adam, has taken under his ægis, like one of those Flemish Madonnas, with the great protecting mantle dominating the whole of the pedestal.

When St Paul dreams of seeing all things "*re-established in Christ*," he gives extraordinary prominence to this word: ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι, *to put everything under one head, to unite all things under the sole sceptre of Jesus Christ.*[1]

On the day of creation God made us in his image, without employing any intermediary between himself and us. From him to us the supernatural life came down directly.

After the redemption, between God and man a point of transition was necessary: the Man-God, the person come down from heaven and lifted up from earth, come down to bring us the divine, lifted upon the Cross to draw us to him.[2] The divine will only comes to us henceforth through the mediation of this well-beloved Jesus, placed between heaven and earth.

In him " dwells all *fulness*."[3] And in him dwells every *perfect gift*. He contains and he gives out, and he contains only to give out. It is of his fulness that we have all received.[4] There is no smallest aid which does not come *from* Christ and *by* Christ. One condition only: that we should be *in* Christ, that we should remain united to him, that we should become a part of him.

[1] Eph. i 10.

[2] *Cum exaltatus fuero a terra omnia traham ad me ipsum* (John xii 32). St Paul well describes this office of Christ when he writes: " Because in him it hath well pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell, and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, making peace through the blood of his Cross, both as to the things that are on earth and the things that are in heaven " (Col. i 19, 20).

[3] And this with twofold reason: in virtue of the *hypostatic union* (*Gratia unionis*) Christ is a divine person; in the second place by virtue of his function as the head of *redeemed humanity* (*Gratia capitis*). The fulness of Christ as head is a finite fulness; as Man-God evidently it must be infinite. Our mediator is a man, the first of men, but he is also God.

[4] "And of his fulness we all have received " (John i 16).

Since the redemption no son of man has become divine unless he become one body with the Son of Man.

It pleased our Lord, indeed, as we were spirit and matter, to employ material elements as a means of grace and all spiritual reality—water in Baptism, the holy chrism in Confirmation, and so forth.

But *above* all these instruments of divine grace,[1] dominating them all, moving them and communicating to them his own virtue, we must see our Lord, that " sacrament *par excellence* of divine grace," our Lord, " author and source of all graces," as says the Council of Trent.[2]

From the glorious region where he now lives Jesus, rich with all the merits acquired during his sorrowful pilgrimage on our earth, fertile in crosses, thinks of us, wants us to be faithful and holy, arranges to procure grace for us, " intercedes with the Father for us," that this grace may be given to us " more abundantly."[3]

He " *intercedes*," as witness the Epistle to the Hebrews;[4] he does more than pray; he inserts a delicate suggestion of demand in his prayer, and that *continually*, so that the outpouring of the supernatural may reach us, at the same time as this continuous " intercession," as a direct result of our frequent recourse to the sources of life,[5] and the facilities that give all their strength to the subtle encroachments of the Water of Life on our too often arrested human liberties.

The sacraments are efficacious rites: they do what they stand for. How much more can the words and actions of our Lord, who is united to the supernatural life, obtain for us;

[1] Whether their cause be *physical* or *moral* does not matter here. We wish to remain outside, and if possible above, all controversy.

[2] Sess. xxi, Can. iii.

[3] John x 10.

[4] *Semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis* (Heb. vii 25).

[5] We know that the *sacraments* are the source, in many cases the principal source—though not the only one, however— for acquiring grace. There still remain *prayer* and the performance of the various virtues.

the sacraments are but the secondary instrument, the testamentary substitutes of the Church for this *capital* power of Christ as the *primary* instrument of grace.

And because this word *instrument*, so rich in potential meaning,[1] is abstract and dead, let us try to grasp what there is in it of concrete and vital.

In a few words, it is this:

The Word freely and lovingly joins himself to the sacred humanity in order that divine life may be given back to our guilty humanity

The sacred humanity freely makes this all-loving will of the Word, to whom it is hypostatically united, every moment its own. For, indeed, how could the human soul of our Lord, joined to the divine nature in the unity of one Person, refuse to confirm a demand or a desire of the Word?

This exigency or this desire of the Word is to save us here, not only by paying for us, but by associating us with his humanly-divine being by the bonds of a mysterious but very real and living liability.

In the sacred humanity of our Lord the medium *par excellence*, or at least the most perfect and best-known symbol of free choice, of choice by love, is the heart.

And so by a most simple descent we pass from the cold idea of *instrumental cause* to the hottest point of Christian worship, from an abstract exposition, practically incapable of inspiring us, to the most palpable and seductive of devotions: the *Sacred Heart.*

What is devotion to the Sacred Heart?

[1] Regarding our Lord as *instrumental cause* of our justification, Suarez (iii P., Q. 8, Art. 1, Q. 62, Art. 5, etc.), apropos of this eighth question, says: "Were it necessary here to deal with all the questions raised by the metaphor of the head, one would have to speak of a large number of matters which have been the subject of St Thomas's deepest study, for this metaphor above all expresses the power of Christ's influence on all those who are, as it were, the parts, the cells of the same mystical or social body" (T. xvii in q. 8, *disp.* 23). We would also refer the reader to Petavius, *de Incarnatione*, Book XII, ch. xvii.

It is devotion to that which, in Christ, has spontaneously approved and confirmed the will of the Word to save us by uniting himself to us and incorporating us with him.

Henceforth we can make no mistake when we hold up devotion to the Sacred Heart as the centre of the religion of the Saviour Jesus.

Our justification is a work of love. As a revelation of the depths at which our union with Christ Jesus works, St Paul directly instances that most intimate of all loves: the union of the bridegroom and bride in a holy marriage. " He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit," says the *Epistle to the Corinthians*,[1] a text which reminds us of that in *Genesis:* " They shall be two in one flesh."[2]

What grand conceptions we get—at once so chaste and so burning with enthusiasm—when this metaphor, so difficult to use by reason of its delicate nature when love is scarcely understood in its purity, is handled by a genius or a saint.[3]

More accessible to all is the liturgically expressed symbol in the Mass of the mixing of the water and wine in the chalice at the moment of the offertory.

That no one may ignore the exact meaning of this singular ceremony which the Church has always so firmly maintained,[4]

[1] *Qui autem adhæret Domino, unus spiritus est* (1 Cor. vi 17). See also Eph. v 22-32.

[2] *Erunt duo in carne una* (Gen. ii 24).

[3] Regarding this intimate union of the soul with our Lord, see Bossuet's commentary on the text in St John, " There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee," in his *Sermon for the Second Sunday after Epiphany;* or, again, the *Discours sur l'union de Jésus-Christ avec son épouse;* Bossuet, *La doctrine spirituelle*, Téqui, 1908, fourth edit., pp. 167-182, and pp. 182-189; *Les devoirs de l'âme qui est épouse de Jésus-Christ.*

[4] The Council of Trent anathematizes those who despise this rite. In the sixth century the Armenians tried to suppress it. The Council of Constantinople in 693 condemned them. One of the reasons given was that the mystery of the sacrifice would then be only imperfectly explained. Many times, and always in the same sense, and for the same reason, the prohibition and the condemnation were renewed.

the liturgy has added a prayer to the rite which reveals its profound significance to us:

" O God, who in a marvellous manner didst create and ennoble man's nature, and in a manner still more marvellous didst renew it; grant that through the mystical union of this water and wine we may become partakers of the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, even as he vouchsafed to share with us our humanity; who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen."[1]

" To become partakers of the divinity of Christ "—these are the culminating words of the prayer. The Council of Trent expressly indicates this. It says that the union of water and wine represents the union of the faithful people with its head, Jesus Christ.[2]

The drop of water loses itself in the wine of the chalice. It becomes wine in some manner. After the mingling it would be impossible to find it again with its proper qualities of a drop of water. United to the divinity of Christ, we also only make one with him, and how closely !

Tradition constantly affirms: " The water is the image of Christians who always need the grace of God "; " The water cannot be offered separately, nor the wine separately, as we must dwell in Christ and Christ in us."

[1] This prayer was formerly in the liturgy for Christmas. We must not be surprised that the mingling of water and wine represents, " with the union of each one of the faithful to Christ, the union of Christ with his sacred humanity on the day of the incarnation." There is a double symbolism. Christ chose for himself the physical body in the womb of Mary and a mystical body in the Church.

[2] *Ipsius populi fidelis cum capite Christo unio representatur* (Sess. xxii, cap. vii).

Chapter III
ITS APPLICATION

I. *In present-day spirituality.*
II. *In the great Masters.*
III. *In the liturgy.*

I

THE superior of a religious house, on his return from India, related to his Holiness Pope Pius X the marvels of frequent communion amongst the peoples of Madura, marvels unknown up to that time. " Oh yes," cried the Holy Father, " formerly one did not give Christ to Christians."[1]

In another, but very real sense, can we not say in the present time there are many to-day who hesitate to give Christ to Christians as he is? If they speak of Christ, unless they are speaking of the Eucharist, they speak of a *far away* Christ, who *had*, doubtless, an influence on our life, but remote, and the *present* action of Christ within our souls they do not mention, as being more mysterious. They talk of the manger, of Nazareth, of the mysteries of the public life, of the Cross, but there they stop. They show the Christ *via, veritas*—that is to say, example and teacher; they forget the Christ *vita*, the Christ who said not only, " I am the *example* to follow, the *truth* to believe," but rather, " I am the *Life* and your life." They make much of the first three Evangelists, but St John or St Paul is too " mystical "; and with this misused and misunderstood word they excuse themselves.[2]

But does not " the pre-eminent ministry " of Christ begin " where his earthly history ends "? The years of our Lord between his incarnation and his ascension to heaven are

[1] *Olim non dabatur Christus Christianis.*

[2] We know that the Synoptics reveal our Lord especially, if not exclusively, as teacher and example. Paul and John show further in what manner our Lord is *life*.

only " the first phase of the real life of Christ, the means chosen by him to enter into contact with us. . . ."[1]

Sometimes we belittle Jesus Christ, thinking to make him the more easily acceptable. We are guilty of an error and of an injustice in this. Alongside the Christ who might be called *pre-existent*, the eternal Word considered before the incarnation—alongside the *historic* Christ, the Incarnate Word as he lived at Bethlehem, Nazareth, etc.—there is the Christ whom we must call the *mystic* Christ in the absence of a better word, the ascended Christ who nevertheless dwells with us, on whom we are grafted as branches, with whom we are incorporated, and who sanctifies us and makes the divine influx pass into our souls in its fulness.

Let us show this Christ as he is, very *near* us. This is exactly what souls need and desire, a near-at-hand God; let us show him mingling his *life* with ours, as he does so intimately; as the paramount question which occupies souls is the question of life, of life evermore broadly understood, evermore deeply lived; let us discover this Christ in his ever active loving function of deification in our souls. It is the present which especially interests, the past interesting only by reason of what riches and strength it brings to the present.

Should we henceforth cheapen the *imitation of the Lord Jesus*, and put in the background the mysteries of the earthly existence of the Son of Mary?

Far from it. The *imitation* of the Saviour Jesus is a necessary means for arriving at a *union* with the Saviour Jesus; meditation on the *historic* Christ is the best means of understanding the *mystic* Christ. God forbid that we should neglect the *human* aspects of the life which Christ lived formerly in Palestine.

What is necessary is not to forget the synthesis of it all, and leave the final object of the Word's advent on earth in the shade.

Ego veritas: listen to his doctrine.

[1] Card. Mercier.

Ego via: walk in his footsteps.

Ego vita: unite with his life.

Union with his life—that is the goal. We only attain it by using the means indicated: fidelity to teachings, fidelity to example given. It is a mistake to neglect these means. But in using these means, let the final purpose be often called to mind. And this final purpose is our participation in the life of Jesus Christ. The *imitation* of the Lord Jesus should not be an imitation *from without.* We have not got to copy Jesus Christ in order to *reproduce* Jesus Christ; we have to copy him in order to be able to *continue* him. Christ wishes to *enjoy continuity in each one of us.* This is the last word in the great secret of the Christian life.

It may be said that if we should place ourselves at a given point of the dogma we would be able to see it in its entirety.

If one rises to the doctrine of the incorporation with Christ, it appears that one has arrived at the summit; above there is only the mystery of God himself. But *religion* is constituted not so much by the mystery of God in himself as by the mystery of our *participation* in the life of God, and the problem of the *tie* which binds us to God; hence the problem of the *Christus caput,* the problem of our incorporation in the Saviour Jesus.

Would we not acquire a broader and deeper notion of our Lord's doctrine if we grouped all the dogmas, worship, Christian practice, sacramental life, around that central idea: "*Christ the mediator*"; if we made all things begin at that milestone? In the religion of Jesus Christ nothing has any meaning outside the function of the divine life to give us or stimulate us by and through Jesus Christ. The meaning of all things is in this unique result to be obtained for the glory of the Father.

How much our personal ascetic life, and, if we are apostles, how much our teaching of the Catechism, our preaching, our direction, would gain in penetrating force by being inspired

with this fundamental view: our poor humanity is called to share, *thanks* to Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ, the life of the three persons.

II

An exposition which goes to the root of the matter, and is at once clear, precise, and moderate, is doubtless no easy matter. But is it for all that an insuperable obstacle ?[1]

What, then, would be the use of the priest's theological studies if he failed to master the points of the dogma which it is his *business* to teach ?

And may it be said of the faithful that they cannot understand — and that profoundly — their incorporation with Christ ?[2]

A priori, such a thought is impossible, for is it not essential that *all* dogma be placed within the reach of *every* Christian ? Is it not essential that the *whole* Jesus Christ be explicable to souls ? The religion of the Saviour is by no means a doctrine for exclusive initiates, particularly, as in this case, where a cardinal point—we should say *the* cardinal point—of doctrine is in question.

Let it be granted that this or that point of theological hairsplitting, or matter devoid of practical import, is the

[1] An excellent thesis which came out recently, *Le Christ dans la vie chrétienne d'après St Paul*, by J. Duperray (Lib. du Sacré Cœur, Lyon), conceals none of the likely dangers. " A definition in human language of the mystery of grace is difficult. Add thereto *the delicate nature of the exact point* dealt with, the relations of the Christian with Jesus Christ. The ground bristles with difficulties. . . . There is the pantheistic error which confuses union with unity and identification. . . . There is the protestant and modernist error regarding the mystic Christ . . . intimately connected with the quietist doctrine " (*Introduction*, p. xv). And there are, more or less in dependence on these fundamental errors, numberless varieties of spirituality, dangerous in conception and loose in expression. The author has shown in a scholarly and brilliant manner how we can vanquish all these difficulties. Heaven grant that our boldness achieve the same good fortune.

[2] Each one doubtless according to the intensity of his vigilance the direction of his prayer, etc.

exclusive domain of the doctors or proper material for scholastic debates. But this is not the point in question.

When we read: " The doctrine of the Mystic Body sums up and unites the theology of St Paul "; " The doctrine of the Mystic Body predominates everywhere in the work of St Thomas and is the keynote of it "; and again: " The whole of Christian dogma is bound up with the doctrine of the Mystic Body,"[1] we cannot believe that this teaching, which is held up as fundamental, is not for *everyone*, or that of set purpose we must regard it as useless or hardly to be spoken of.

We do not in any wise claim that, in order to live *in Christ*, we must have had all the riches of life *in Christ* made clear to us. To know and to practise are not necessarily the same thing. But he who is better and more thoroughly informed will most assuredly be able to play his part better and more fervently.

The beauty, the greatness, and the fruitfulness of the subject are such that it is well worth our while to make an effort to get at the heart of it, for our life's sake. The great masters have abounded in thinking so.

Le Prix de la Grâce of Fr. Nieremberg is well known. He deals with the problem in full. In his book, *La Vie divine*,[2] this is how he exalts our union with Christ the mediator in his exposition of St John (xvii 24): " We must go beyond *agreement*, which takes it for granted that the two interested parties are still *two*. Let us talk of uniformity which, taken etymologically, reduces to a single whole." Later on he defines with more exactitude, and properly understood his expression is not incorrect: " The word *union* is not enough: we must say *unity*."[3]

[1] Anger, *La doctrine du corps mystique de Jésus-Christ d'après les principes de la théologie de St Thomas* (doctoral thesis), Angevine Publishing Company, 1910, pp. xii, 11.

[2] *Vita divina seu Via Regia ad perfectionem*, by Fr. Emile Nieremberg (Frankfort, 1724). See chapters xxix and xxx: *de uni-formitate . . . de Dei-formitate cum Deo.*

[3] *Arcto adeo nexu cupiebat nos bonus Jesus cum Deo colligari et uniri, ut unum potius videremur quam uniti* (p. 368).

" Christ is Son by his union with God; we, by our union with Christ. He and we, in truth, though to a different extent and in a different manner, partake of the same divine life. There is the same divine life in all the children of the Father, in the Son and in the sons, in Christ and in us."[1]

Following the same line of thought, another Jesuit, Fr. Judde—French this time, and charged in the seventeenth century with the formation of his colleagues in the decisive year which prepares them for the ministry of souls—gives in the beginning of the *Second Week* of his *Thirty Days' Retreat* a meditation *on* "*Jesus Christ as Head*," or "*The Life of Christ in Christians*," of which the following is the preamble:

" What St Paul said all Christians can say: I live; no, not I, but Christ liveth in me. The life of which we wished to speak is not that life of Jesus Christ in man, which consists in thinking like him, loving like him, acting like him; it is something more essential. For one must be a Christian before one can become a perfect Christian. One is, so to say, the basis of the other; it is the life of which we are speaking that makes us Christians. . . ."[2]

[1] *Christus est Filius per unionem cum Deo; nos, per unionem cum Christo, quia dum unimur Christo per charitatem, ut palmites cum vite, participamus eundem spiritum Christi qui est divinitas: hac enim forma universalis et assistens animat et regit omnes filios Dei, naturalem et adoptivum, Christum et nos—Seraphinus, seu Schola Sancti Amoris*, Lib. I, Consid. xliv, ed. Munich, mdcclix. There is a French translation which we could wish were better known. In Liv. II, Consid. xxix, p. 120: *Qui amat Deum Deo identificatur, in quantum licet creato cum increato . . . et Deus est alter ego et ego alter Deus. . . . Reperiemus intimam unionem, imo identitatem et transformationem in Deum.* So strong do the expressions seem that one hardly dares to translate them. " He who loves God is identified with God, in so far as the infinite and the finite can be identified. God becomes another 'us,' we another God. Much more than a union, it is a transformation and even identity."

[2] In *La vie intérieure*, seventh edition, p. 83, Fr. Foch expresses the same thought in other terms. Referring to the known text: " Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," " It is well, doubtless," he remarks, " to imitate Jesus

Fr. Judde carries his thought out to the end: " I am less Jesus Christ's than in some manner a part of Jesus Christ He is in heaven, he is in our tabernacles; but he is in me: there he lives, there he works, there he makes me live. . . . One cannot ignore these truths without ignoring religion itself."[1]

Many spiritual writers use analogous expressions.[2] This will be observed by going over these pages, where we expressly quote the most varied authorities—though always those who have the best right to speak.[3]

Christ in the moral order, in the order of the affections and of the actions: *in ordine morali;* but it is wrong not to make ourselves understand at once that through grace we already resemble him in our being: *in ordine ontologico.*"

[1] Our union he declares to be such that " we know not ourselves if we know not Jesus Christ." " Not to love Jesus Christ, not to be touched by what concerns him, is to treat *ourselves* as strangers and enemies."

Much more at the hour of my death, if I am in a state of grace—if, that is, I am a member of Christ—the reason of my confidence will be: " My judge is hardly to be distinguished from myself." This last expression, in truth, is found in manuscript only. Its audacity seems to have led to its rejection. But we understand the idea, and it contains nothing excessive.

[2] We cannot refrain from mentioning above all the beautiful book of Dom Marmion: *Le Christ, vie de l'âme* (Maredsous Abbey, Belgium).

[3] A recent controversy has once more brought up the oft-heard objection: " The spirituality of the Jesuits insists upon *Christ the example*, but somewhat neglects *Christ the Life*. Judging by the texts quoted, which are intentionally chosen from Jesuit authors, we see what the statement is worth. And what other names could be adduced ! See, for example, for our country and in the seventeenth century, in *l'Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France*, by H. Bremond, the third vol., *L'école Lallemant*. In the eighteenth century, Caussade and Grou; in the nineteenth, Frs. de Clorivière, Ramière, Terrien, Foch. It is not at all obvious to us that a direct or indirect dependence on Bérulle is observable (vol. iii, *L'école française*). According to Nadal, the companion and authorized interpreter of St Ignatius, the object of the *Exercises* is to dispose one to act in everything *cum suavitate fortiter in Christo Jesu.* The Man of the Constitutions should be *instrumentum Deo conjunctum* (is this not the *adherence* of Bérulle ?), and should practise union with God *dili-*

III

Let us, then, follow these Masters. In Jesus Christ we may consider *only the sacred humanity* with which the Word is hypostatically bound. Let us go farther. Let us try and ascertain in what manner Christ unites himself *to each one of us* so as to be continued in us.

In the course of the year, moreover, as the ribbon of the liturgical feasts unwinds itself, we become aware of the predominating purpose of the Church, which shows itself in reminding us with maternal persistence at each new mystery of the great central mystery of our incorporation with Jesus Christ.

It is of consequence, indeed, that we should not forget that all of our Christian solemnities have two sides: on the *obverse* side of the medal Jesus Christ, on the *reverse* the Christians, his members; though not the same effigy, it is the same metal, one selfsame coin. Looking at the *face* of the coin, we see Jesus Christ, the *head;* but underneath the relief reveals to the searching finger what the eyes see not: all those who compose the *body* of Christ.

The purpose of every feast is to help us " to form Christ in us ";[1] to make us a little more " Christ "; to make us see a little more clearly the union which exists between Christ and all his members.

The birth of the Saviour reminds me that I must make Christ be born in me.

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genter et magna aviditate in dulcedine spiritus in Christo Jesu (*Epist. Pts. Natal.*, t. iv., pp. 651, 652). And since St Ignatius is given by H. Bremond as "*a direct precursor of Bérulle,*" to get one's inspiration from the former will be inevitably to *draw near* to the latter, without necessarily *being dependent* upon him. We should add that St Ignatius cannot be adequately grasped unless, in addition to his *Exercises* (which H. Bremond in vol. iii alone appears to take into account) the Constitutions are studied as well.

[1] Gal. iv 19.

What an intense desire to receive him springs forth from the invitations of *Advent:*[1]

> The King must come: *regem venturum* . . .
> The Lord is at hand: *prope est.*
> He will come to-day: *hodie* . . .

And of the three Christmas Masses, if the purpose of the first is to remind us of the eternal generation of the Word in the bosom of the Father, and the second of the generation in time of the Saviour at Bethlehem, the third, in the mind of the Church, celebrates the divine generation by Baptism in our souls, which results from the incarnation of the Word and our incorporation in his human-divine person. Trinity, Incarnation, Grace—three mysteries all commemorated at the same time; three births purposely put in juxtaposition, that we may not violate them in our pious remembrance on Christmas Day.

The liturgy of the Presentation tells us of Simeon, the old man at once poet and prophet: " the Holy Ghost was in him. He had received the response from the Holy Ghost . . . he was led of the Holy Ghost." Can one celebrate better the " sweet guest of the soul " by whom we live in Christ ?

Do not the mysteries of the *childhood* lead us to believe in grace with a progressive movement, harmonized by, with, and in Christ ?

We come to March 25, the *Annunciation,* evoking the mystery of the double and unique maternity of our Lady. Mary is the Mother of Christ—of all that which is Christ—therefore not only of Jesus, but of each one of us, a member of her Jesus. A little later the feast of the Dolours of the Blessed Virgin recalls so tragically that she has become our own Mother by consenting to bring Jesus into the world and educate him with a view to the redeeming sacrifice.[2]

[1] Generally the particular object and meaning of each feast are therein explained.

[2] The part played by Mary in our divine history deserves a special study, which will come in its time, God willing.

All *Lent* in the liturgy prepares for the night of Holy Saturday, the double resurrection of Christ and the Christian after their twofold, or rather their unique and common, sacrifice. We will go into this later on.

Then comes Sunday *in Albis*, the Sunday of whiteness, with its expressive introit: "As new-born babes"; and the Church's counsel reminds us of that given in Baptism: "Receive this white garment, and see thou carry it spotless before the judgement-seat of God."

After the *Ascension* comes the descent of the Holy Ghost, and by him our intimate union with Christ, persevering union, the object of which is to celebrate the series of Sundays following upon and continuing *Pentecost*, with at their head, most important of all, *Trinity* Sunday.

And before Advent begins come all the memories of November, *All Saints*, triumph over the glorious members of the Saviour Jesus; and *All Souls*, eloquently inviting us to flee from all voluntary weakness, and reminding us, through the necessity of purifying guilty members, of union in Christ of Christians on earth and of the faithful in purgatory; the numerous solemnities of *Dedication*, which celebrate less the material churches than the interior temple of each soul, the divine sanctuary holding its place in the great edifice of which Christ Jesus is the necessary and solid corner stone.

Outside of these feasts, the periodical return of which requires a year, the *Mass*, with its rhythmic frequency—every week or oftener—can and must prevent us from being long out of contact with the splendours of our incorporation with Christ.

We have suggested elsewhere[1] how those who know not only how to *pray at Mass*, but to *pray their Mass*, have entered into the heart of the mystery which just now occupies us. Further on we take in this capital point in detail.[2]

[1] *L'idée réparatrice*, Book II, ch. iii. [2] Book VI.

Outside of these fixed reminders, daily, weekly, or yearly, does not the life of a well-advised Christian have many occasions for penetrating the "Mystery of Christ"? Does not *each sacrament received*, if received with full intelligence of faith, constitute a renewed demonstration from a special point of view of our incorporation with the Saviour Jesus?

Leaving aside for the moment Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, the Eucharist, what a wealth of meaning, from the point of view of the incorporation, there is in Marriage, Extreme Unction, and Orders.

Ritual prayers for the *recommendation of the soul* are careful to remind us that the sick person is "a member of the redemption,"[1] and the Church requests that the seventeenth chapter of St John, a crucial text . . . "I in them and you in me, that they may be consummated in one," etc., be recited over the suffering member of Christ.[2] Lastly comes this wish: "that he (the dying person) may live indissolubly united to thee, and that he may never in the future separate himself from thee and thy elect."[3] The holy oils teach us so eloquently that our body itself is closely united to Christ, and that one day the glorified life of the soul will overflow in our flesh, purified by the divine marks of the Cross.[4]

As to *Marriage*, it is enough to refer to the fifth chapter of Ephesians.[5] This supplies substantial and suggestive matter for speaking to young couples on the day of their nuptial benediction. Even in Christian families is Christian marriage appreciated at its true value? Is it realized that the union of the two should be modelled in intensity of love and depth of devotion on the union of Christ and his Church?

[1] *Et unitati corporis ecclesiæ membrum redemptionis annecte.*

[2] *Ego in eis et tu in me, ut sint consummati in unum.*

[3] *Ut vivat tibi amore indivisibili, qui a te et ab electis tuis numquam separari potest.*

[4] *Qui suscitavit Jesum a mortuis, vivificabit et mortalia corpora vestra propter inhabitantem spiritum ejus in vobis* (Rom. viii 2).

[5] Eph. v 22-33.

And, lastly, the *sacrament of Order*. To cite only one passage amongst the more explicit, how much "theology" there is in the following admonition: "Pontiffs, priests, deacons, sub-deacons, ministers of different grades, form altogether but one body, which is the body of Christ."[1]

It would seem impossible for the Church to do more to inculcate in us the knowledge and love of our incorporation in the Saviour Jesus.

It is for us to profit by it.

[1] *Ex multis, et alternæ dignitatis membris, unum corpus Christi efficitur.—Ceremonies and Prayers for the Ordination of Priests.*

BOOK II

THE MANNER OF OUR INCORPORATION WITH JESUS CHRIST

CHAPTER I

JESUS MAKES US DIVINE THROUGH HIS SPIRIT

I. *General idea.*
II. *Sketch in detail.*

I

WHEN the formation of the body of the Man-God from that of the Blessed Virgin was in question, when she asked, "How shall this be?" the angel Gabriel replied: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the wonder shall be accomplished by him."[1]

It is necessary for each one of us to have Jesus Christ born in him, not with that corporal birth which concerned Mary, but with the spiritual birth by the state of grace. If we ask, "How shall this be?" the reply follows: "The Holy Ghost will accomplish the marvel."

"God is all in man (incorporated with Christ)," writes Fr. Lebreton, "and if between these two infinitely distant extremes such an unhoped for union must be consummated, it is that *Christ* has transformed man by the *Holy Ghost*, has penetrated him with his life and drawn him unto the Father."[2]

By means of sanctifying grace we enter into the great current of the mutual relations between the Father and the

[1] Luke i 34, 35. [2] J. Lebreton, *Le Dieu vivant*, p. 342.

Word, between the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and the descent by which we enter into this river of infinite life, while we remain finite, is as follows:

" Charity proceeds from Father to Son and from both to the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost communicates it to souls (Rom. v 5). This charity communicated to souls incorporates us with Jesus Christ (Eph. iii 6), makes us members of Christ (1 Cor. xii 27), makes us participators of the being of Christ.

" Jesus in his turn, whose brethren we are, leads us to his Father, and thus charity, which went out from God, returns to God in passing through us by him."[1]

Here, then, is the circuit—from the Father to the Son; from the Father and the Son to the Holy Ghost; from the Holy Ghost by Jesus Christ to our souls: this is the descent. The ascent is from our souls by the Holy Ghost to Christ; from Christ to the Father.

And the intermediary between the Father and us? St Catherine of Siena says Christ, the true *bridge*, playing on the word *pontifex*, passage between the finite and the infinite. The bond between us and Christ is his Spirit, the Holy Ghost.

Let us try to enter into this marvel. We are in the heart of the invisible, in the great mystery of God, in the great mystery of souls. We must be resigned not to understand everything.

Several points of light emerge. Let us work out from them. What they reveal to us will be beautiful enough to give us the desire to go on, by the aid of prayer, as it silently explores its way, awaiting the day of the fulness of revelation.

St Paul, describing the rôle of Christ the Mediator, does not say " divine life has been given to us *by* Jesus Christ," but " divine life has been given us *in* Jesus Christ." *By* would only indicate the Saviour in his earthly existence

[1] de Régnon, *Étude de Théologie positive*, vol. ii, ch. iv.

and in his function of Redeemer. *In* specifies Christ, the glorified head of the Church, sanctuary of the Holy Ghost, whose fulness is continually poured down upon us. From this we understand more clearly the double intervention of Christ for obtaining divine life for us.

Thanks to the merit of his incarnation and death, he earned for us nineteen hundred years ago the first coming of the Holy Spirit.

And now, every moment, he obtains for us the influx of the divine, which is essential in order that we may grow in grace.

Original intervention and once for all; perpetual intervention and as often as it is necessary.

And this gift of the Holy Spirit, as often as our soul has need, we owe to our Lord, considered as God and as man.

As God, as Word, Jesus conjointly with the Father *sends* the Spirit physically into the soul of the just; that is one of the divine *missions*. As man, he first of all *merited* this divine benefit for us; then in ceaselessly interceding for us in heaven he still *obtains* it for us at each moment.

Our Lord possesses the Holy Ghost first by *right of nature*, in virtue of the hypostatic union, and by *right of conquest*, as head of redeemed humanity, official holder of the fulness of grace.

Alluding to this last title, St Cyril of Alexandria wrote: " It was not for himself that the only-begotten Son received the Holy Spirit, but for us."

St Paul continually calls the Holy Spirit the Spirit of Christ. For him " to live *in Christ* " and " to live *in the Spirit* " are almost synonymous expressions. Baptism, which produces the double effect of incorporating us with Jesus Christ and of pouring out the Holy Ghost on us, is presented to us by the Apostle, sometimes as baptism " in Christ," sometimes as baptism " in the Spirit." The two expressions *in Christo* and *in Spiritu*, while not absolutely identical, are very often interchangeable.[1]

[1] Prat, *loc. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 424 and 436, note T.

" We know," says St John, " that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit."[1]

And the great Latin doctor of the incorporation, echoing the Greek St Cyril of Alexandria, insists: " The faithful become the body of Christ if they consent to live of the Spirit of Christ. Only the body of Christ lives of the Spirit of Christ."[2]

Thus the " *manner* " is very clearly shown.

We become a " portion of Jesus Christ,"[3] at the moment when we begin to live of his Spirit. We are incorporated from that moment, and according to the measure of our spiritualization. We are attached to the body of Christ the day when we are attached to the Spirit of Christ, to the Holy Spirit. We will show this to be so in detail.

II

When does *Christ* begin " to *be formed* in us " ?[4]

The day on which we adhere to his divine religion, and more explicitly when we make official profession of that religion in receiving Baptism. On that day sanctifying grace enters into us with its uncreated element: the *Holy Spirit.*

Thus the birth of Christ in us and the coming of the Holy Spirit constitute, under different aspects, an identical reality.

After generation, *growth.* To make *Jesus Christ* grow in us is to give a larger place to the divine life, hence to the *Holy Spirit.* The more a Christian strengthens his supernatural life,[5] the more he ceases to be a child,[6] to become a perfect man in Jesus Christ, the more he will make the life of Christ to shine out in the strength of virility.[7]

[1] 1 John iv 13.

[2] *Fiant (fideles) corpus Christi, si volunt vivere de Spiritu Christi. De Spiritu Christi non vivit nisi corpus Christi.*—St Aug., Tract xxvi *in Joan.* No. 6.

[3] The word is Fr. Eude's.

[4] Gal. iv 19.

[5] *Roborati in interiorem hominem* (Eph. iii 16).

[6] Eph. iv 15; 1 Pet. ii 2.

[7] *In virum perfectum . . . ut vita Christi manifestetur in carne nostra mortali* (2 Cor. iv 11).

"To walk in *Christ*,"[1] what is this but to be guided by the *Holy Spirit* "from glory to glory"[2]—that is to say, from virtue to virtue? To practise piety, sweetness, patience, charity, peace, this is what will make us reproduce Christ and become "a new man."[3] And is it not the Holy Spirit within us who busies himself with this renewal?[4]

Have we fallen into sin? What does this mean if not that we have driven the Holy Spirit from our souls,[5] that we have "extinguished the Holy Spirit"?[6] The Epistle to the Hebrews calls this offence "to crucify *Christ* in us."[7]

Even then the Holy Spirit does not forget us, and seeks by every kind of warning graces to reunite us to the only foundation, which is Jesus Christ.[8] The deluge has covered the soil of the soul with its devastating flood. But, as in the beginning, the Holy Spirit is there moving over the waters.[9] He is waiting for the flood to retire and for dry land to be revealed where he can find a resting-place, and work at making the soul master of the life-destroying flood.

Let the soul again enter into a state of grace. It will again possess the Holy Spirit. This is called, says St Paul, "to make *Christ* live in us."[10]

Are *Christ* and the *Spirit*, then, the same person? Not at all. The same method of operation, that is all.

We are made divine by the Holy Spirit, and we are made divine by Christ—or, rather, *in* Christ *by* the Spirit.

Listen to Cardinal Mercier: "The divine life ever living and ever given to Christ, Son of the living God; Christ always giving, in union with his Father, the Holy Spirit, Spirit of filial piety and love, to souls who put no obstacle in the way by mortal sin; lastly, this Spirit of filial piety and

[1] Col. ii 6.
[2] 2 Cor. iii 18.
[3] Col. iii 10; Eph. iv 24.
[4] Titus iii 5.
[5] See *Dieu en nous*, pp. 93-100.
[6] Isa. lxiii 10.
[7] *Crucifigere Christum in nobis.*
[8] 1 Cor. iii 11.
[9] Gen. i 2.
[10] Rom. viii 10.

charity ever returning to the Father by our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit."

We cannot better sum up the combined action of the Holy Ghost and of the Saviour Jesus in the history of our divine life, or, as an ancient author says, of our "triune life."

We would willingly say with St Thomas:[1] If Christ is the *head* of the mystic body, the Holy Spirit may be considered as its *heart*.[2] He who seals and consummates the eternal society of the Father and the Son constitutes the great principle of life, of movement, and of cohesion between members and Head, between Christians and Christ.

Given this action of the Holy Ghost, would it not be for him to be called *head* of the Church rather than Jesus Christ, for him who is the *heart*, the vital organ *par excellence?* No. The Holy Ghost was not made incarnate. He is glad to be our "guest," and how near to us we shall see shortly; but in everything he dwells infinitely above us; he is not one of us. Christ, God as he is, and at such an infinite distance from us, has overcome that distance; and his giant stride[3] in coming to Bethlehem has made him one of us, a child of man in our image and living among men. He is the *Word;* yes, but *incarnate.* As Word he passes infinitely beyond us; as incarnate he adopts proportions nearer our own, and this is his best title to being our *Head.*

As there is divine power in his arms, his value as Head will only be better assured; but it is as a person adapted to our humanity, that he must become Head of humanity.

Besides this fundamental reason, may we not add, the heart is the organ which by the rhythm of its successive beats sends the blood to the different parts of the body, including

[1] Third part, Q. 8, Art. 1.

[2] Certain authors—Cajetan, for example (Comm. in Art. 1, Q. 8, third part)—struck with this rôle of the Holy Ghost, go so far as to call the Holy Ghost and Christ *coprincipes* in the body of the Church.

[3] 1 Cor. xii 11.

the brain? The Holy Ghost is very exactly named "the heart of the Church," for it is he who distributes grace to all the just, including our Lord. "One and the same Spirit," asserts St Paul, "worketh all these things"—graces for the perfecting of the individual, graces for the apostolic ministry —"dividing to everyone according as he will."[1]

More than this, the heart is a concealed, invisible organ, although continuous and dominating in its action. So with the Holy Spirit; and to perceive his action in a soul or souls, we must listen attentively and for a long time.

We think it useless to insist further. Everyone will have perceived by now the similarity, and at the same time a slight difference, in the two expressions: "to live by the Holy Ghost" and "to live by the life of Jesus."

CHAPTER II

DEVOTION TO THE HOLY GHOST

I. *Why emphasize the "Holy Ghost" in a work done in common by the three Persons?*
II. *Personal love—the Spirit of Jesus Christ.*
III. *If we knew "the gift of God."*

I

WITHOUT further delay, let us come to the part that should be played in our life by piety, by devotion to the Spirit of Christ, and to the *Holy Ghost.*

First note this: in particularly mentioning the Holy Ghost we do not at all mean that our change into a member of Christ comes about in two stages: that the Holy Ghost unites himself to the soul straight away and by himself; and that then immediately, and through the intervention of the Third Person, the two other Persons become present in us.

[1] 1 Cor. xii 11.

This is not the way in which it happens.

The divine life which is the result of our incorporation with Christ—or rather in which our incorporation with Christ consists—is a work necessarily common to the entire Trinity.[1] It is with a common heart and by common benefit that the three Persons make the member of Christ divine.

Common though this operation may be to the three Persons, it will yet be useful for us to bring out especially the rôle of the Third Person.

And for this reason: a great number of texts which expressly mention the Holy Ghost do not mention, but take for granted, the Father and the Word. This is evidently in order to call our attention to the real place of the Holy Ghost.

In the formula used by Gabriel in the Annunciation, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, Mary," does the angel mean that it is only a question of the Third Person? Manifestly not. But the Third Person was less familiar to Jewish thought, hence the expediency of specially mentioning him. In the entire Old Testament the Holy Spirit is not explicitly named. God desired at the beginning of the New Testament that he should be given prominence. But it is only apparently an exclusive formula. We are to understand, not that "the Holy Ghost will come *alone*," but "he will come *also;* do not forget him."

When it is a question of Christ being born and spiritually developing in us, the meaning is the same—affirmative, that is, and not exclusive.

We are thus to read St John: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of God";[2] or, again, in the conversation with the Samaritan woman,[3] followed by a commentary on the Living

[1] Since it is an operation *ab extra*. Leo XIII reminded us of it in his letter, *Divinum illud*. The Vatican Council also had a definition prepared on this point.

[2] John iii 5.

[3] John iv 10-14.

Water, given by the Apostle in the seventh chapter: " Now this he said of the Spirit, which they should receive who believed in him."[1]

The texts from the Fathers, especially the Greek Fathers, are numberless: " Christ dwells in us by the Holy Ghost ";[2] or again, " Union with God is accomplished by the Spirit, for God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, there to cry Abba, Father !"[3]

It may be said that it is hardly possible that such express and repeated mention be made of the Holy Ghost if there is no motive justifying it.

Such a motive exists.

If God wishes us to honour his divine unity, he also wishes us to recognize the Trinity of Persons, and to attribute to each one of them the actions which have a certain analogy or special relation with the exclusive properties of these adorable Persons.

The Father is First Principle; the Son is begotten; the Holy Ghost the infinite goal of the divine love of Father and Son in its infinite beauty.

Therefore it is natural to attribute adoption to the Father, regeneration to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost the mission of impressing on us the likeness of the Father and the Son.

And to speak only of the Holy Ghost, since he is, in the depths of God, the fruit of the common *holiness* of Father and Son, would it be arbitrary to consider him especially in the work of making us partakers of the divine life, as pre-eminently the *sanctifier?*—since he is, in God, the fruit of the common *love* of the Father and the Word,[4] may we not, in the triune operation by which we become

[1] John vii 39. [2] St Cyril of Alexandria.

[3] St Basil; see texts and reference in Terrien, *La Grâce et la Gloire*, vol. i, pp. 395 *et seq.;* vol. ii, pp. 376 *et seq.*

[4] The eleventh Council of Toledo, in its magnificent profession of faith, says of the Holy Ghost that he proceeds at once from the Father and the Son: " For he is the charity, or the *holiness* of both."

partakers of the divine, consider him as the source *par excellence* of *charity?*

Holiness, love—these words resume the work of perfecting us in the image of God. For the *Holy* Spirit should be especially emphasized where it is a question of sanctification; and nothing certainly is more to the point than to name the spirit of *love* where a work of love is in question.[1]

" It is only Christians," cried Bossuet, " who can boast that their love is a God. God is love. . . . Oh, divine theology!"[2] And of that divine theology the most divine part is surely in that he who in God is love in Person deigns, by his " marvellous conjunction " with us,[3] to bring about our incorporation with the Saviour Jesus.

II

All the formulas of the Church referring to the Holy Ghost may be summed up in two. He is the *highest* reality: *Donum Dei altissimi;* that reality which is *most ours: Dulcis hospes animæ.*

Guest from heaven, and therefore infinitely remote; guest of the soul, and therefore infinitely near. The *very high* by his bond of incomprehensible intimacy with the Father and the Word; the *very near* by his incredibly intimate tie with the heart of the just.

We appreciate the gift of the Word which has been made to us. Have we as much practical esteem for the gift of the Spirit? Fr. Huby, the founder of Breton retreats in the seventeenth century, in his *Retraite sur l'Amour de Dieu,* comparing the wonder of the Incarnation with that of the

[1] There exists in God a love common to the three Persons: *essential* Love. But the Holy Spirit alone possesses divinity through love itself, and precisely because he is love; hence his own name: Love *in Person.*

[2] 1*er Panégyrique de saint François de Paule.*

[3] *Mira conjunctio.* The phrase is Leo XIII's in his Encyclical on the Holy Ghost.

dwelling of the Holy Ghost in our souls, gift of the Word to all of us, and the Holy Ghost to each of us, says:

"The Father and the Holy Ghost so loved the world that they gave it the eternal Word by the Incarnation. . .

"The Father and the Word so loved the world that they gave it the Holy Ghost, the love personified of Father and Son.

"This second gift, if considered in itself, is not and cannot be greater than the first; however, if regarded according to its particular circumstances, it is more to our advantage than the first; it is Jesus Christ who tells us so.

"The incarnation constitutes the general and universal good, given to the entire world, no one excepted. But the real presence of the Holy Ghost in our hearts, fruit of the glorious ascension of Jesus Christ, is a privilege reserved to Christians alone, or rather to the just under the law of grace.

"To what glory does this indwelling (sort of incarnation) of the Holy Ghost in our hearts elevate us ? . . ."[1]

"If I were thou," exclaimed a holy soul before a like wonder, "I would not choose myself."[2]

But it is really us that he has chosen. It needed himself to do such a thing.

But if I find it difficult to contemplate the Holy Spirit in the corrupt tabernacle which I myself am, there is a grand and infinitely more attractive reliquary, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sanctifying grace means presence in us of the Uncreated Being. Our Lord, as Head of redeemed humanity, possesses sanctifying grace in its fulness. Hence he possesses the Holy Ghost in fulness.[3]

What divine marvels the presence of Love in Person, of the Holy Spirit, is going to produce in our Lord.

We are not left to conjectures on this point. The Holy Ghost is revealed in many places as the animator of our Lord's actions.

[1] Fr. Vincent Huby, *Retraite sur l'Amour de Dieu*, seventh day, third med. [2] Poulain, *Journal de Lucie-Christine*, p. 78.
[3] Note that he already possesses him by his hypostatic union.

The Holy Ghost, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, inspires the Word's resolutions of redemption.[1] The Holy Spirit dictated most of his acts to the Word, once he became incarnate. The Saviour went to the desert " led by the Spirit."[2] For the return from the Jordan the Holy Ghost again intervenes.[3]

Do we appeal to the compassion of the good Master? The Holy Ghost holds open the heart of Jesus to mercy, and helps us to find a constant Intercessor in this adorable Saviour.[4]

If one could open that living shrine, that receptacle of love, the Divine Heart of the Incarnate Word, one would see in the centre this incomparable diamond, the Holy Spirit. And why should not the worship of the Spirit of Love not harmonize with the worship of the loving Heart of Jesus?

Hence devotion to the Holy Ghost is devotion to a purely spiritual reality: it is the Word indeed who took flesh, not the Holy Ghost; but contemplating this purely spiritual reality in the Saviour Jesus, I find that it is at the centre of another reality, whose human outline my imagination perceives. How much more easy intimacy thus becomes.

If I say " the Holy Ghost," I immediately think of the inaccessible; if I say " the Spirit of Jesus," I immediately evoke the human-divine person who is our Lord. I have a very clear impression that the inaccessible has become nearer. He remains a purely spiritual reality, but from unattainable riches he becomes the wealth of Christ, and so far a little less utterly beyond my grasp.

The Son who is the way leading to the Father is also the way for finding most easily the Holy Ghost.

[1] Heb. ix 14.

[2] *Ductus est in desertum a spiritu* (Matt. iv 1); and St Mark even more energetically, *Spiritus expulit eum in desertum.*

[3] *Plenus spiritu sancto regressus est a Jordane* (Luc. iv 1).
Semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis (Heb. vii 25).

And between the Son and the Holy Ghost there is a strange rivalry: it becomes an almost never-ending problem to find out if we are incorporated with the Son because we are united to the Holy Ghost, or united to the Holy Ghost because incorporated with the Son. In reality the two operations make only one. We are incorporated with Christ because the Holy Ghost takes possession of us, and the Holy Ghost takes possession of us because we are incorporated with Christ.

III

If we knew the gift of God ! If we knew that incorporation with Christ is to possess in oneself the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of light and love, with all the gifts of the *Veni Creator* or of the *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, the Spirit capable and infinitely desirous of " creating in us a new heart."

St Teresa, while still a child, loved to pray before an image fixed to the wall of her room, and which represented Jesus at Jacob's well with the Samaritan woman at his feet. May we not believe that it was there that the saint found from her earliest youth the understanding love of the " interior mystery," of that life in the Spirit which she so excellently describes ?

So much for private example. Now for official language. The Church warns us, *Sic nos tu visitas, sicut te colimus*, meaning: "Just as we honour thee, so dost thou visit us."

How can those who pay no attention to the Holy Ghost expect him to pay any attention to them ? Does not this sort of retaliation disturb them ?

Before adopting adventitious and second-rate devotions, let us take up those of the first order. A modern writer speaks thus, with a certain acrimony, of our too feeble devotion to the Holy Ghost:

" After having carved a Christ with the arms straight up, to signify that he did not suffer for all men, Port Royal was

pleased to discard the Dove. Even in lay society, knights and the old royal order of the Holy Ghost were soon at an end. Everyone connected with Jansenism took pains to plunge the worship of the Third Person into oblivion. Not being able to alter the Breviary, they condescended to leave him the feast of Pentecost; but even to-day in certain parishes they do not hesitate to have their first communions on this feast in order to give to Christ the little homage yet left to the Holy Ghost."

The first duty of a member of Jesus Christ to the Spirit of Jesus Christ is that of an attentive respect for Him who desires to be in him not only the great *Gift*, but the ever-present one,[1] enabling us ever to live "a life hid with Christ,"[2] a "life in heaven,"[3] if we wish.

"Unfortunately," complains Gratry, "it is the surface of our soul which is inhabited. And as to the depths where thou art to be found, O Holy Spirit, who art in the secret sanctuary in the centre of the abyss, I go not there. And yet, O my God, didst thou not show me one day the depth of the abyss and the place of thy concealment in the lowest depths? . . ."[4]

Our lives would bear such a truly Christian stamp if we were to practise the spirit of faith; if, in the hurly-burly of our actions, we were to make frequent visits "to the depths of our heart, to our unity and divine image."[5] Even a good life produces but small results, because our attention is too distracted. We are at the mercy of every action, and between two of our actions we reserve ourselves hardly a minute of silence and light which would put us face to face with the vivifying Spirit, who is present in us, but whom we have paralyzed, forgotten and left to the obscurity of our soul's

[1] Naturally with him who is in a state of grace.
[2] Col. iii 3. [3] Phil. iii 20.
[4] Gratry, *Commentaire sur St Matthieu*, vol. i, p. 74; vol. ii, p. 136.
[5] Ruysbroeck.

depths, and who vainly awaits a look, a heart cry, a loving movement.

Perhaps you may say this is only applicable to souls called to exceptional intimacy with God.

In the first place, how do you know that you are not one of those souls called to exceptional intimacy? How do you know where God would like to lead you if you were more generous and more attentive?

At any rate, you are a member of Christ, like all members of Christ; a Christian, like all Christians; one of those who are called simply "the faithful," of the mass, having, since you read this book, the desire to be a fervent soul amidst that mass; it is certainly to you that the pressing invitation to live by faith is addressed.

What a source of living energy we would possess if we were to think oftener of the Holy Spirit present in us, and incorporating us continually with Jesus Christ.

"Let us go to our own heart; let us listen and obey," advises Fr. Judde. "Let *more than half of ourselves* be always there, if possible, attentive to what is said there and to what takes place there, and I will answer for your perfection."[1]

Admirable advice.

Every time we are obliged to play the part of Martha, let us do it joyously, serenely, valiantly, without afterthought or regret, always and solely in view of God, and so far as possible "in God" and "with God." As soon as we are no longer called "out" by charity or the duty of our state, let us return as quickly as possible to the intimacy of the soul, and therein with a humble and spontaneous effort, with respectful love, take up "the office of Magdalen," apply ourselves to finding God, or better still —assuming that we have not really left him—apply ourselves to finding his presence again more explicitly recognized.

[1] Judde, *Œuvres*, vol. v, p. 70.

Here is the ideal which one of the first companions of St Ignatius took for himself:

Fieri quidem si assuescas in Christo, facere potest, it will easily happen, if you are accustomed to live in Christ, *ut quum atra agis*, that in the midst of ordinary occupations, *cor tuum sit Deo unitum*, thy heart may be united to God, *non habitualiter solum vel virtualiter, sed et per simplicem orationem*, and that by continual and simple prayer. This is what Ignatius referred to when he recommended us to live " in the Lord."[1]

It is a great error to hope that such a habit of the spirit of faith is acquired without effort. But to accomplish the work, the attentive and generous soul is not alone. Someone prepares and helps him to live " in the Spirit "—the Holy Spirit in person. He alone can prepare the heart for his own coming. He alone can prepare in us a welcome worthy of himself.

Only the Spirit of Life can lead us to the life " *in the Spirit*," which is no other than the true life " *in Christ*."

The moment when Tobias sets out, a great person appears " who knows the way that leadeth to the land of the Medes."[2] What good fortune! The two pilgrims throughout the journey walk together.

" Then all things being ready that were to be carried in their journey, Tobias bade his father and his mother farewell, and they set out both together."

We must also leave many things in order to depart with the angel, but if we are generous the angel will accompany us, a greater angel than Raphael, the Angel of angels, the supreme Messenger, the Holy Spirit.

" Knowest thou the way that leads to the country of the Medes ?"

" I know it well; I have often walked through all the ways thereof."

[1] *Mon. Hist. Soc. Jesu*, epistolæ Patris Natal., vol. iv, pp. 722, 723.
[2] Tobias v 5-23.

Why is it that the Holy Spirit should have so often had to go over them alone, those roads which lead to the True Life?

Let us not quit this guide. A good companion in arms is almost a victory assured. When the companion in arms is called the Spirit of the great Victor, the "almost" disappears triumph is certain.

BOOK III

THE ORIGIN OF OUR INCORPORATION WITH CHRIST

CHAPTER I

WITH REGARD TO GOD, WHO HAS WILLED IT

I. *The origin of our incorporation—from the point of view of God—is involved in "our predestination to grace."*
II. *The mercy of the Father in willingly delivering up his only Son for the salvation of his adopted children.*
III. *Incarnation and redemption.*

"FOR as many of you as have been *baptized* in Christ, have put on Christ."[1]

The sacrament by which we are incorporated in Christ is the same that makes us Christians, and that sacrament is *Baptism.*

If, having established the *fact* of our incorporation with Christ, having stated the question as to the *manner* of this incorporation, and having shown its *principal effect*, which is the communication to our soul of the Holy Spirit, together with the Word and the Father, we proceed to inquire *when* our share in such unique privileges began, we must answer: The day on which, as tiny children, we were taken to our parish church, when the priest, as he poured on us a little water, pronounced the divinely operative words: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

That is the *when, so far as we are concerned.*

But we may amplify the question—as does St Paul for

[1] Gal. iii 27.

other reasons—and examine when, *so far as God is concerned*, we were incorporated with Christ, and when *so far as regards Jesus Christ himself*.

I

So far as concerns God. Here it is only a question of one eternal " when," if these two words can be used in conjunction, and it is the entire mystery of our predestination to grace.

Let us praise and bless God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, said St Paul, who, giving us his only Son as Mediator by the Incarnation, and uniting us by Baptism with him, has overwhelmed us with all kinds of spiritual blessings in Jesus Christ. Because of the same Jesus Christ he has chosen us from the beginning of all things, that through love we may be saints and spotless, not only before men who see nought but the outside appearance, but before God who has fore-ordained that we should be his adopted children through no merits of our own, but by the merits of Jesus Christ, by the pure will of his mercy, and in order that praise and glory might accrue to his grace, that grace which he has deigned to give us in Jesus Christ, his well-beloved Son.[1]

How shall we give expression to a thought at once so complete, so compact, so overflowing with love for God and his inscrutable mercies, and for Jesus Christ, the ineffable Mediator by whom all the life of the Father is communicated to us ? How, without deforming or weakening it, shall we interpret the passage of the Apostle, who attempts to set forth without a break all the blessings bestowed upon us by God in Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ, and therefore going back to the source of all blessings, reaches the point of our eternal election in the depths of God, immediately afterwards bringing us face to face with the carrying out of his decree in time.[2]

[1] See Eph. i.

[2] Maeterlinck, the profane translator of that profoundly mystical work of Ruysbroeck, *The Adornment of the Spiritual*

The most sublime of all acts occurring in time, our sanctification by Jesus Christ; the most mysterious action of eternity, our predestination to holiness by God—these are the sum and substance of what the Apostle says. These two mysteries are not joined in his conception, but constitute one sole and rare favour for the better setting forth of the unequalled magnificence of grace, that something by which, on account of the merits of this well-beloved Jesus Christ, we become holy children of God and brethren of Christ. *In laudem gloriæ gratiæ tuæ in qua gratificat nos in dilecto filio suo* (Eph. i 6).

Who are we, that God should thus from the beginning of time have thought of us, have loved us, have chosen us, and have destined us to the glory of divine sonship, so that at a given moment we may be called to love him, to bless him, and to serve him?

It is remarkable that we should have no idea of there being anything extraordinary in this world of faith wherein we move. We do not find it strange to be loved by God, and to be *loved* by him *to that point.* Since the beginning, God who thinks of us, who purposes to draw us out of nothingness, who since his first idea of us, from the beginning, bestows on us his boundless love to the extent of determining to summon us to his eternity, to an intimacy so great and so utter that the bare attempt to fathom it makes one's head swim, to an intimacy by which we are made very clear participators of his most incommunicable privilege, made by him as God, so immensely aloof, so independent, so distant from us, poor finite creatures, and yet becoming, thanks to his mercy, so near to him as to become penetrated by him, living in him.

Marriage, has well remarked that words "have been devised for the ordinary uses of life, and they are unfortunate, ill at ease, and amazed, like vagrants around a throne, when from time to time some royal soul conducts them elsewhere." This uneasiness of words, struggling with mystery, has never been better expressed than in this passage.

And this love, thus hovering over us before we have even drawn our first breath, this boundless, absolute, overwhelming love, is so firmly anchored in the heart of God, so one with him, that if our beloved race betrays that love and necessarily calls for divine justice and death, the will to love of the thrice holy God will after all remain the will to love; or, since concession must be made to the inalienable rights of justice, this will to love will rather be transformed into one of pity, and the Father, unable to tolerate the damnation of those whom he has chosen to be his children, by a kind of stratagem against himself causes his own Son, also God, to take flesh, the flesh of those who have sinned against him, as though he could not bear to leave unbridged the gulf that separates us from him. And since he does nothing by halves, in order to convince us once and for all, who are so incorrigibly slow in believing and so impervious to the perception of the immensities of God and of his love, having "*charged the Word*" to take flesh, he makes him share the responsibility of that sin—under which, once committed, we were powerless—and, sending him to the Cross, thanks to that superabundant reparation offered for us, he wins the right, which he appeared to have lost, of continuing to love us, to love us beyond all love, the right of once again bestowing himself unutterably, of recommunicating his divine life to us.

Does God, then, love us more than he loves his own Son? In a certain sense, yes. And Salvien, with remarkable vigour, in his *De Gubernatione Dei*, unhesitatingly asserts: *Plus amat nos Deus quam Filium Pater.* And he goes on: *That is patent. He loves us his children more than his Son, his adopted ones more than his only born, his guilty children more than his Son, who, like him, is God.* And the proof? Has he not delivered up him to save us?[1]

[1] *Evidens quippe res est, quod super affectum filiorum suos diligit Deus, qui propter nos Filio suo non pepercit. Et quid plus? Addo, et hoc Filio justo, et hoc Filio unigenito, et hoc Filio Deo. Et quid*

Read Bossuet's first sermon for Friday in Passion Week, especially the first section, where these aspects of faith with which we ought to be permeated are extensively set forth. Here is a short extract, which will give a taste for the rest of it: " God has a Son who is equal to himself, and who satisfies his love as entirely as he exhausts his fecundity; and nevertheless, O love, O mercy ! this Father who has so perfect a Son proceeds to adopt others. This benevolence of his towards men, this inexhaustible and overflowing love, causes him to give brothers and companions to his first-born and only Son, and joint-heirs to the well-beloved of his heart.

" Nay more, he delivers his own Son to death that his adopted children may be born. It is the same love of the Father which delivers, abandons, and sacrifices the Son, and which adopts us, gives us life, and regenerates us. By this merciful design his productive and inventive love has happily inspired him to abandon in a manner his Son in order to make way for the adopted ones, and to bring about the death of his only heir so that we may assume his rights. Children of adoption, how heavy a price was paid for you by the eternal Father !"[1]

II

What strange originality was shown by God in delivering his Word for the salvation of poor wretches like us ! God himself warns us that " *all flesh is nought*," is chaff, and less than nothing. And for the good of this nothing, to save this nothing, God yields up his all, yields him who is equal to himself. He consents to this incredible, unallowable, yet entirely true act that the Word be joined to this flesh, to this nothingness, this nought: the Word, in the astounding epitome of St John, becoming flesh, *caro factum.*

Nay further, for the benefit and consolation of us sinful

dici amplius potest? Et hoc pro nobis, id est pro malis, pro iniquis, pro impiissimis (P.L., t. liii, col. 81).

[1] *Premier Sermon pour la Vendredi de la Semaine de la Passion*, 1st p. (Vives, t. ix, p. 518).

nonentities the Father permits Christ to lead a life of labour and poverty, to pass thirty-three years of poverty between two mysterious abysses: the Crib and the Cross.

Truly we dream. God cannot have acted thus. His preferences are too whimsical, his findings surpassing prodigious. Must we conceive of him as a jealous personage, greedy of his privileges, excessively sensitive where his honour is concerned, and anxious at any price, at whatever cost—even at that of his Word, God like himself—that this honour, so trivial a matter, being ours, should be paid him unreservedly? But there is no relation between this contingent of extrinsic glory, which changes nothing in his nature, and adds nothing to his intimate and substantial glory, and this extraordinary undertaking of his Son. Again, must we represent God as a savage and bloodthirsty being? He can save us at the least expenditure possible—that is to say, by requiring of his Son as little as possible, assuming that he wished to save us through him. And yet, on the contrary, he exacts the uttermost reparation: the sacrifice of the Saviour to the point of the ghastly agony in the garden and the martyrdom on Calvary.

Does not this show a transcendental selfishness which at once challenges the imagination and is at variance with both the mercy and wisdom of God?

In the first place, we must beware of conceiving, like the Protestants, a *narrow-minded* God, mathematical in his requirements, who turns his due worship into a relentless and absurd arithmetic: *I have been wronged in ten wrongs, I will have reparation in ten;* who wants blood for blood and injury for injury, like a kind of exasperated *schoolmaster* worried by unruly pupils. We must have, instead, a *clear idea of sin.* One single sin would of itself justify the oblitération of the universe, and even then the punishment would not be strictly adequate. This gives us a glimpse of what God requires by way of reparation.

To represent the Most High as inflamed by a spirit of revenge, as is sometimes the case, is to fail in doing justice to the Old Testament. Israel has sinned. God is vexed. And is it not that these somewhat crude expressions, these perhaps inexact images, are rather to be construed as indicative of a tendency to attribute our own feelings to God than as a *state of mind* proper to God himself? That quite simply is the truth of the matter. By sinfully evading the rule of justice, which is remunerative and bountiful, man has inevitably fallen under a revengeful and punitive justice. But that is no argument against the mercy of God. The contrary would be directly opposed to the wisdom and requirements of his very being. God is God, and he cannot, without denying himself, be indifferent to offences and profess to be as pleased as though homage were done to him. Not that our homage supplies anything that may be lacking in his essence, or that our sins deprive him of anything needful to his essence; God is immutable, and in his *plan* nothing changes. But in our own plan order has been overturned and must be re-established. The wisdom and justice of God demand it. Otherwise confusion would be at a premium, and the sinner could say to God: "I can offend you with impunity; your mercy prevents you from chastising me."

An analogy may be observed with regard to certain texts of the New and especially of the Old Testament, which seem to attribute a certain bloodthirstiness to God: a liking for the sacrifices of goats or lambs under the Old Law, a relish for the Saviour's immolation under the New Law. God takes no pleasure in acting as executioner; he has none of the savage instincts of the mob which loves to see rivers of blood in the arena or the Princesse de Lamballe's head paraded in the streets.

True, he permitted that the Saviour be sacrificed; nor will anyone ever be able entirely to elucidate this mystery of love for us. But we must remember that the Saviour did

not offer this sacrifice under compulsion; he offered it spontaneously and freely, confirming by his love the just will and love of his Father. There is, then, no savagery, but twofold love, and no trace remains of blind severity or uncompromising obduracy.

While allowing the exercise of his justice, God is in no wise savage, since the sacrifice is spontaneous in him who sanctions the reparation: spontaneous in the Word who, observing the inadequacy of the ancient reparations, of his own free-will declares: *Ecce venio. I offer myself; here am I.* Spontaneous in the humanity of the Saviour, whose fundamental feeling is to confirm this saving will of the Word with all the power of his love.

III

But since a mere nothing was sufficient so far as the Saviour was concerned—St Thomas and all other writers agree in this, and the most elementary reflection proclaims it to us—wherefore all this blood and display of tortures? The coming on earth we may grant, but the going up to the Cross? The Incarnation; yes, well and good; but the Redemption, and what a Redemption!

Perhaps the most satisfactory answer is that God has so willed it. Such an answer, however, hardly satisfies our feeling. *Homo* one could yet understand, but *vermis et non homo!* "*Man*, yes, but earth-worm? The *verbum caro* of St John, so be it; but the *virum dolorum* of Isaias? In truth it is too much."

But let us think on it. From the moment when the Word had undertaken to come down, who should decide where he was to stop? From the moment that he undertook the cost of sacrifice, where were the reasonable bounds to be placed, where the line to be drawn? The extremity of his sacrifice is astounding. Should one not rather wonder at the beginning of his sacrifice and at the moment of his first humiliation? Once the journey had begun, we ought not to marvel at a step more or less. The very least of his humiliations is every

bit as much an indignity to him as is the greatest, and equally revolting to his personal dignity as that chosen by himself.

Obviously, his own choice appears terrible to us. But any other, inasmuch as it came from God, could not essentially have been less so. We are not shocked at finding together the two words *man* and *crucified*, but at the association of the words *Word* and *Flesh*, man and God.

Truly the Crib is more terrible than the Cross.

It is not a far cry from *little child* to *suffering*. The distance from man who is born to man who mourns is quickly got over. We know well enough from personal experience that to be man and to suffer is one and the same thing. But from *God* to *man*, from *Word* to *Flesh* is far indeed—a very abyss.

The overwhelming fact is not so much the Redemption as the Incarnation. The path of suffering and the Cross are understandable. Man, when he loves, will go to extremes quickly enough, but along the line of being ready to suffer for those whom he loves, for this is our human way of doing things. However deep my wonder may be when I reflect that God is concerned, I know that he is man, and I can form some sort of comparison with the human soul at its loftiest. But in dealing with the Incarnation we are confronted with a psychology that is purely divine. God alone could have invented that. I have no longer anything to go on. I no longer know anything; the ground slips from under me. I drift, I have nothing to catch hold of but transitory explanations, which are trembling and agitated in face of this startlingly brief assertion: *Verbum caro*, the Word was made flesh.

The presentation of the Crib is always touching. Touching, yes, but also terrible, and more terrible than touching. That in no wise detracts from the depths of the mystery contained in that other word: the Cross.[1]

[1] The last enthusiastic exclamations from the heart of Angela of Foligno are well known. "O incomprehensible, made comprehensible for my sake. O uncreated, lo! thou didst create. O inaccessible to spirits and bodies, yet by a miracle of power tangible to thought and hand. O Lord, I see the depth and

For we still have the difficulty to contend with—namely, that though one mystery, taken by itself, may appear greater, that is no reason why the Cross may not be regarded as an unfathomable abyss.

And since the most insignificant action of his divine Word would have been pleasing to him, why, we ask, did God will or allow this frightful suffering whereof, in regard to Christ, we shall soon have to say something? Doubtless to bring home to us the price of supernatural life, our restoration to which must cost so dearly.

To give us encouragement in our difficulties. For if at certain moments of our life we had not the example of our crucified Lord and of his Mother, how often should we not be cast into the depths of despair?

Let us take an irresistibly attractive proof of the way he has loved us, and of the way in which his Son has freely shared this love with him. We dream of a God who gives us a limited measure of redemption, redemption at bargain price. God is not as we are. He never haggles. His measure is always big and generous, *mensuram bonam, confertam et coagitatam.* He does all superlatively well. In the sphere of creation, to the perfect natural man he adds the supernatural. He scatters in profusion the stars and the insects. In his place we would have restricted the quantity of infinitely small creations, and made the infinitely large more commonplace and reasonable. What purpose is served by such prodigality? The behaviour of the Apostles at the lavishness of the perfume poured out by Mary Magdalen shows the weakness of our humanity. We do not like anyone to do too much.

In the Redemption God does things in his own way.

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height of the charity which thou hast communicated to us in this incarnation! O Lord, blessed art thou who givest me to understand that thou wert born for me. Oh, what glory to see and feel as I see and feel that thou wert born for me. To feel that truly is delight and the joy of joys" (*Livre des visions et révélations,* trans. Hello, fiftieth edition, pp. 333-334).

As usual he exaggerates. *Nimia caritate qua dilexit nos:* God always does too much. It is what stamps him. Hence the saints always go to extremes, and this is the highest praise that can be given them, as, first marvel, it proves that they have understood the *too much* of God, and, second marvel, that they want to rival him by their own *too much.*

But how could the Father find glory in seeing his Son suffering the ignominy of the soldiers, the utter abandonment of the scourging, the scandal of the Cross?

It is a fact. *That* ought to suffice for our faith, but as our feeling rebels, may we not add: *How wonderfully great is suffering?* Sacrifice elevates man. Why should it not have the same effect on the Man-God? The ignominy is only apparent. Never was higher moral beauty made evident, and herein the Father found his glory.

Man, let us add, will attempt to repeat this sacrifice. If any glory ascends to God from our planet, does it not spring from sacrifice accepted, and seized, and eagerly sought after for love of Christ and of his Cross? Let us draw up the balance-sheet and see how much less glory God would have were it not that the Cross had made us love sacrifice. The history of God's glory on earth is inseparable from the record of the folly of the Cross.

Chapter II

. . . OUR LORD WHO HAS DESERVED IT

I. *Jesus Christ incorporates us with him "on Calvary."*
II. *How to penetrate to the core of the mystery of "the Cross."*

I

THE first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, which reminds us of our eternal predestination by the Father to incorporation with Christ, points out at the same time the exact moment at which the *Son*, the Word Incarnate, has incorporated us with himself in time, and has made us members of his body.

It is on Calvary, when he offered his life and shed his blood for us, that the Saviour achieved our redemption and that divine grace was given to us. *In quo habemus redemptionem per sanguinem ejus, remissionem peccatorum, secundum divitias gratiæ ejus.*[1]

That we should become partakers of the divine nature at the cost of blood! This, then, more than our predestination of complete love, or than the act itself by which we first partook of that nature, is the great point of the mystery.

"Cast, oh cast your eyes," exclaims Bossuet, "on Jesus. Observe him in the midst of his sufferings. Christians, you are born of his wounds; amidst infinite sufferings he has brought you forth to a new life; and the grace which sanctifies you and the spirit which regenerates you have been poured upon you with the blood from his cruelly torn veins. Children of blood, children of pain! . . ."[2]

The sacrifices so willingly undergone by *our Lord* for our salvation no longer affect us; we are too familiar with them. We are used to regarding the death on the Cross as altogether simple and normal, as a debt which had to be paid. It is an episode that forms part of our historic framework. It was so, and therefore should be so. And we pass by these miracles of love as though the matter in hand were a mechanical or biological phenomenon, fatal, unavoidable, necessary, since the Word freely offered himself, *quia voluit*, for he was free indeed not to have saved us, above all by such means.

Just now we apparently depreciated the merit of the Cross in favour of the Crib. Not at all.

Certain aspects of the Crib may appear to be more inscrutable, nor have we ever asserted otherwise; but the Cross is none the less the culminating point in our Saviour's career.

[1] Eph. i 7; Col. i 14.
[2] Bossuet, *Œuvres oratoires*, vol. iii, p. 697.

It is well to find out what this Cross was, for then one could better grasp the price of what it gives us.

When we evoke the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, let us stir up our faith. The immolation of the Saviour is so living for him who can see and understand. Who has not been overwhelmed with admiration and pity at the sight of a badly-wounded man from the war? Christ also is a disabled man, and of him we read—unmoved—such texts as *Exinanivit semetipsum, he emptied himself; formam servi, the form of a slave.*[1]

So accustomed are we to see these two words together, and to see them followed by the stupendous *accipiens—he took it upon himself to become a slave*—that the set phrase no longer surprises us, and in order to get at the reality within it we have to break it up, to destroy its set formality, and see into all its naked reality and astounding consistency; the improbable but sure fact, forcing itself upon us, notwithstanding its formidable and affecting transcendency; the living, *actual*, and painful fact, hidden in the well-known phrase.

"If a stranger had entered the garden of Gethsemani in that last fearful night, attracted by the dismal echoes of a mournful and beseeching voice, what a spectacle would he have found. First, he would have come upon eight men in a deep sleep; then a little further on he would have met with three others in a like condition: the men hardly troubled by what God thinks, or how he suffers. But from the spot where the second group was stretched on the ground the stranger might have heard distinctly these words uttered by a voice groaning with pain: *Pater, si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste!* The words are addressed to a father . . . ; one would say, then, that a son is there. He speaks of a chalice, of a cup . . . ; is it that his father would make him swallow some deadly liquid as a punishment for a dreadful crime? . . . Finally, if the stranger ventured further

[1] Phil. ii 7.

and his courage did not fail him, he would see, some steps away from him, a man of majestic beauty prostrate on the ground, his arms outstretched, his eyes raised towards heaven, all trembling, gasping in the pangs of death, and covered with drops of blood which trickle down to the ground from his face and clothing; and beholding such a heart-rending sight, what would be the feelings of this stranger? Moved by pity, he would tear up his clothes to bandage what he supposes to be wounds; but then, seeing that all this blood comes from no wound, but from a sweat caused by the ghastly agony of the suffering, his pity would be turned into wonder and fear. . . . And were he to know that this man, thus torn by pain, is none other than the Son of God, and that he, the stranger, himself is the cause of all this bloody sweat, he and his sins for which the innocent man is suffering and moaning there under his very eyes, I do not know which of them would then suffer more, the Lord in agony, or this man who beholds his God suffering for love of him."[1]

II

It matters little whether we can express our feelings about Christ with such vigour or not. But we must know that prayer alone can give our faith a sharp sense of *reality*, and make it at once living and inspiring.

Prayer only, we have said, can reveal the "*psychology of the Father*" to us. It alone can enlighten us regarding the psychology of the Son, of the Agony and Calvary. It can, so to speak, enter into what Christ thought and wished at the moment of his immolation; how, utterly at one with the unerring exactions of divine justice and stirred up by this justice to an insuperable zeal, he devotes himself to adjust the reparation for sin and to obtain for his Father, insulted by our rebelliousness, the homage of entirely humble submis-

[1] Vieyra, vol. iii, serm. ix.

sion; how, fully aware of our debt, and consequently of our slavery, he satisfies our ransom a thousandfold, and, in union with himself, restores us to friendship with his *Father;* how, clothed with our garment of sin, he is exposed to divine exigences to the point of proving—what certain authors refuse to admit, but what they must perforce accept if they follow the text closely—the feeling of a kind of curse which at his Agony crushes him and makes him sweat blood, and on the Cross entails that mysterious desertion by the Father which borders on deprivation of the beatific vision.[1]

By what miracle can one hypostatically united to the divinity at the same time be identified with sinners to the point of *being responsible for their moral evil*, and live in such a contradictory state of mind as to know that he was inexpressibly just, and to feel that he was bearing the sins of the whole world ? Who could ever explain this ?[2]

Here, indeed, the prie-dieu[3] can help us to better surmises than the study table.

Alas ! for how many of us is the Saviour merely a very sweet but hazy figure, like enough to the delicate silhouette in the morning mist seen by the Apostles as they returned from fishing—*phantasma est*—an uncertain and vague figure, but not the real and familiar living being that they had heard

[1] These expressions may be found in Bourdaloue, and after him in Mgr. Gay and Mgr. d'Hulst.—M. Rivière, the author of *Dogme de la Rédemption*, finds them exaggerated, and, indeed, they need explanation. We think with P. d'Alès that to penetrate into the soul of Christ in his Passion one must descend to these abysses.

[2] Regarding the different feelings (sadness, fear, etc.) which have vexed the soul of our Lord at certain moments, Schwalm, O.P., has much to the point in *Le Christ d'après St Thomas d'Aquin*, ch. viii and ix.

[3] As a model of "prayerful" theology—that is to say, full of science and full of love, and therefore stimulating to piety—we must mention the pages of P. Lebreton in the *Revue Pratique d'Apologétique* (March 13, April 1, 1922), on *The Agony of our Lord.*

talking intimately to them, whose look had pierced their hearts. St Ignatius, in his *Exercises*, makes us ask each time that we meditate on our Lord for the grace—for it is a grace, and one of the most precious—to know him more intimately, in order to love him more passionately and follow him more faithfully.[1]

Angela of Foligno said in her way: "He who knows in truth loves in fire."[2] And in order "to know in truth" she advised a "pure, unceasing, humble, and violent prayer . . . , a prayer that beseeches, full of great longings, hurling itself on its object."

"Man loves as he sees." The more we see this crucified Man-God, the more our love of perfection increases, by so much more are we transformed into him whom we see.[2]

The rule is invariable. If it is our desire that Christ be for us someone "*real*," someone "*living*"—in a word, "*someone*"—then, through constant meditation, we must have come very near to the reality of his life, of his person, of his work.

"Master, where dwellest thou?" "Come and see. *Veni et vide.*"

[1] *Intime cognoscam ut ardentius amem et studiosius sequar.*

[2] Angela of Foligno, *Le livre des visions*, trans. Hello, pp. 220 and 224. "The sight of him, my son, the sight of him! Did man but see the Passion of the Man-God with perfect contemplation, did he but comprehend with profound gaze his poverty, his insults, his pains, the annihilation which he suffered for us: if, by grace, he saw those things as they truly are, he would follow Jesus Christ along the road of poverty, of continual compassion and scorn. . . . Let thy heart be utterly emptied, and thy spirit will only try to refill itself with what is from him. If this aim is too high, at least have and keep the consciousness of God crucified."

One knows that no holy soul ever entered more closely into the sufferings of our Lord to the point of being "transformed in the pain of Jesus crucified" (p. 133).—While meditating on the Passion, she made acquaintance with "weakness to the uttermost," and these words escaped her: "No one can relate the thing as it is. Did anyone describe the Passion to me exactly as it was, I would answer him: Thou thyself hast suffered it."

" Master, the secret of your sufferings?" " Can you watch one hour with me?"

The original text of this last reply is a reproach: " You could not watch one hour with me."—Let each one of us see to what extent this reproach falls upon him . . . and see to it that he deserve it no more.

But to meditate efficaciously on, and get all we can out of the Passion, we must connect it with the whole of our sacred history.

" After being made man, Christ bore the bloody sweat, was wearied, suffered humiliating insults; his body was torn—as certain saints assert—by more than five thousand strokes of the scourge; he was crucified between two infamous thieves.

" Why all that? To win grace for us.

" O holy angels, tell me then what is this grace? O cherubim, full of knowledge, tell me what is this grace which has cost our God so dearly?

" What could the Son of God do that he has not done? He has done all he could to give us grace and bring us to value it. Most assuredly it is very precious, since, on account of it, the most precious thing in heaven or on earth has been offered, the life of the *Son of God.*

" Wherefore the fastings of Jesus? Why his sweats? Why his scourging? Why his crown of thorns? Why his Cross? Why his death? Why all that? For grace."[1]

When we meditate on the Passion, let us remember to do so as part of our supernatural life, of our incorporation with Jesus Christ, of all the wonders contained in this too colourless, too abstract word, expressive enough in its original sense, but devoid of sense by reason of our way of using it without really trying to enter into all that it means.

When we commemorate the sorrowful mysteries, let us reflect that it is our substitute who is there, but that he does

[1] Nieremberg, *Le prix de la grâce*, vol. i, pp. 170-174.

not act as a *substitute* for us purely and simply. He has *joined* us to himself, which is not the same thing. It is he who is in agony, he who is scourged, he who suffers insults. But it is we who, through him, atone. He holds our place, but with him we hold his. He is *us*, but we him. We must not leave him to do everything alone—at least, if we would be Christians otherwise than in name.

Chapter III

. . . THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO ACCOMPLISHES IT

I. *The Holy Spirit brings about our incorporation with Christ on the day of Baptism.*
II. *" Realize " our baptismal grandeurs.*
III. *The use of this " realization " by faith in moments of temptation.*

I

WILLED by God from all eternity, obtained by our Lord at his *Passion*, our incorporation with Jesus Christ becomes a reality for each one of us at *Baptism*. " For as many of us as have been baptized in Christ," wrote St Paul to the Galatians, " have put on Christ."[1] And to Titus: " But when the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared . . . he saved us by the laver of regeneration."[2]

" Formerly, you were sinners," he explained again to the Corinthians, " but you are washed: but you are sanctified: but you are justified: in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God."[3]

And one does not forget our Lord's words to Nicodemus: " Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."[4]

And do we appreciate our Baptism as we should, this

[1] Gal. iii 27.
[2] Titus iii 4.
[3] 1 Cor. vi 11.
[4] John iii 5.

unique moment when we were incorporated with Christ, "conformed" with God, and made one with Christ ?[1]

The great passing for us, sensible beings, seems to be that from time to eternity. In reality, it is *a* great passage, and truly one runs no risk of exaggerating its importance. Death has this unheard of and formidable privilege, that it fixes our life, it determines the number of our merits, nor can we increase or diminish these one pin point.

But if we lived by faith, *the* great passage for us would be that which conveys us from the order of sin to that of grace.

Grace and glory are on the same level. On condition of dying without sin, the day on which the thin envelope of our body is torn, behold us incorporated with Christ in virtue of our title, and made joint heirs with Christ and the adopted sons of God, and in possession—sooner or later, at any rate certainly—of God for ever.

Between sin and grace, on the other hand, there is an abyss.

The great passing, then, does not take place at the end of life, but at its beginning; it is not called death, but Baptism.[2]

The calling to the Christian life is not always appreciated at its due worth in an atmosphere of traditional faith, sometimes because it *is* rather a matter of tradition than considered faith.

See how Ernest Psichari, shortly after his conversion, valued the favour of having been baptized formerly.[3]

"I might have lived all my adult life without grace; nevertheless I was a child on whose forehead the priest had traced the sign of redemption, and now, after thirty years of shipwreck, baptismal grace welled up again, and I knew

[1] French: *deiformés*, *christifiés*.

[2] And in the degree which we shall point out penance. But penance itself is only possible thanks to Baptism. Everything hangs on this fundamentally first event.

[3] In the Greek rite, it is true, but validly. See "Action surnaturelle dans la conversion d'E. Psichari," by P. Noble, in *R. des Jeunes*, May 25, 1920, p. 389, note.

that I was the beloved child, he to whom all has been truly given."

A young Parisian *employée* was the only member of her family who had been baptized. Having fallen ill, she was taken into a sanatorium managed by nuns. There she was instructed, and wished to become a child of God. How she suffered on returning home to find her parents indifferent or antagonistic to God! "Just think," she said to the priest to whom she confided her trouble, "God does not dwell in them. My father has not the faith. My mother is so good; but she lives wrongly. Her goodness is of no avail for heaven. My little brothers are not baptized. Why have I received so many graces—I, and not they?"

It is difficult to listen to such talk without being moved to tears. How many Christians, long ago baptized, know nothing of the price of the immense grace which they received! We were so tiny then. We were made children of God without being able to grasp the meaning of it.

Later, if we have never been at pains to stimulate our Christian faith, we have continued unmindful of it. We are *divine*, and know it not; we are incorporated with Jesus Christ, and know it not; the Spirit of God is within us, and we know it not. We are no more than little children all our lives. Lamentable, indeed, is our unconsciousness.

To start with, perhaps we could not do better than study and meditate upon the rite itself which makes us children of God. The key of the matter is in a text of St Paul.

"Know you not," he wrote to the Romans, "that all we who are baptized in Christ Jesus are baptized *in his death?* For we are *buried* together with him by Baptism *unto death:* that as Christ *is risen* from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we may also walk in newness of life." Baptism is thus put before us as a death and a resurrection, and as a death and a resurrection with Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ.

The ceremonies for Christian initiation which took place in the early ages, and the time of the year in which they were celebrated, most wonderfully expressed these two ideas.

Baptism was by immersion. Generally the neophyte had to plunge three times into the water, in memory of the three days which our Lord passed in the sepulchre, or perhaps rather in honour of the three divine Persons. In the neighbourhood of the basilicas a little building had been put up, and in the middle of it a kind of piscina, octagonal, hexagonal, square, or round, generally covered by a ciborium. This species of basin contained lustral water. The little building, separated from the basilica, but near enough to it to show that it formed the vestibule of it and was the preliminary entrance to it, was called the baptistery.[1] Mosaics and paintings usually depicted our Lord in the waters of the Jordan, near him John the Baptist, and above them the Holy Spirit in the familiar form of a dove.

Sometimes the basin or piscina took the form of a *tomb*. But the catechumens did not need this to enable them to understand that when they plunged into the lustral water they were going to be *consepulti cum Christo*, "buried together with Christ."

The explanation which we have from the catechists of the time and from the Fathers—St Gregory of Nyssa, for example, St John Chrysostom, St Augustine, and the rest—refers to Baptism as a mystical burial and resurrection, in imitation of the burial and resurrection of our Lord.[2]

The very *time* chosen for the administration of Baptism was plainly indicative of the intentions of the Church.

Indeed, the Church very early made a law that the sacrament by which we are made Christians should be conferred on Holy Saturday only.[3] And this legislation is

[1] One of the most perfect examples may be seen at Poitiers, not far from the cathedral.

[2] Some of these testimonies may be read in the article on Baptism in the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, col. 199.

[3] Secondarily also at the time of Pentecost.

supported by the councils until the twelfth century, exception to be made only in case of necessity.

The object of Lent is to prepare us for the Easter feast and for the ceremonies of Christian regeneration, to prepare a twofold resurrection from death: the figurative one of our Lord, and the actual one of the newly baptized. The Passion and Resurrection of the Saviour are the mystery of death and the mystery of life: the birth to grace in Christian Baptism is no less the mystery of death and the mystery of life.

The neophyte who was preparing for reception into the Church completed his initiation into the Christian life during the forty days which preceded Easter. The two mysteries were, in his case, interwoven, and his thought was the true Christian thought, for indeed the two mysteries are but one. Christ, left dead in the tomb, came out alive on Easter morning, his clothing all bright with glory. And he, the new Christian—another Christ—entered the baptistery dead, and also came out of it alive, all bright in the new garments which he was allowed to carry. His birth to grace was but a fulfilment, a foreseen addition, a continuation of our Saviour's resurrection. *Convivificavit nos in Christo . . . conresuscitavit et consedere fecit*, as St Paul says in his letter to the Ephesians.

Evidently we are out of our reckoning with our existing baptismal ceremonies, alike indeed in symbolism, but curtailed. The essentials of Christian initiation, the fundamental grandeur and beauty are maintained, but the external pomp of the rite is diminished. All the more reason for giving our mind to it. Real Christian intelligence has declined because the exact understanding of Baptism has decreased. Let us imitate the early Christians. Let us duly associate the mystery of our regeneration in the faith with the mystery of our Saviour's resurrection. Easter will thus become for us something more than a glorious anniversary; it will be at the same time a reminder of reality of the highest importance

to us: of our escape from sin and our entrance into grace, or, what is the same thing, our escape from death and our entrance into life, through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ.

In the light of this great idea we can more readily understand why the confession which everyone has to make at least once a year has been fixed by the Church for Easter time. The grace of Baptism may be lost. "The bath of penance," to use an archaic expression so full of meaning, is there to take its place. One understands that the reason why the Church multiplies her *alleluias* during the Easter solemnities is both one and complex.

Complex, because the resurrection which she celebrates embraces a triple flight from the tomb—that of the Saviour, that of the newly-elected of Christ, and that of the faithful who have fallen and repented.

One within this same complexity, because all resurrections are the resurrections of one and the same being, whether from the point of view of the head or of the members.[1]

II

Hence, their own Baptism must be made known to Christians.

We celebrate Christmas and Pentecost, the visible appearances in the world of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Do, then, the invisible comings of the Holy Trinity in our souls deserve to go unnoticed? Are the divine Persons less entitled to respect when they enter our souls interiorly than when they are visible externally? We celebrate the coming of the Word in the Crib, of the Holy Spirit in the Cenacle. Why not the coming of the Word, of the Father, and of the Holy Spirit into this crib that we are, into the cenacle of our souls?

Doubtless, the visible comings make more impression on us as creatures of sense. The Church, moreover, celebrates

[1] *Cf.* Book I, ch. iii, § 3.

them in her liturgical feasts. But let us not forget that we are not forbidden to keep up the anniversary of our Baptism as our most important feast.[1]

Would it not be well to popularize the custom, that each Christian should think more of celebrating his spiritual than his temporal nativity, of making a feast of his Baptism rather than of his birth? That would surely be a great act of faith. For to him who thinks as a Christian, what a difference between becoming a child of man and being made a child of God!

In iniquitatibus conceptus sum, et in peccatis concepit me mater mea. In sin I came into the world; these are my credentials at birth.

"Go out of him, unclean spirit, and make way for the Holy Spirit. I am delivered from sin; hence my joy at Baptism."

In the early ages of the Church it was usual to go in procession on Easter Sunday and each day of the octave after vespers to make "station" at the solemn spot where, during Holy Saturday night, one had received the sacrament of Christian initiation. Having come forth from the bosom of the Church their Mother—that is, from the baptismal fonts—and thus being born by the Holy Spirit to divine life, the new Christians joyfully made this pilgrimage to the baptistery,

[1] The idea, indeed, is not a new one. It will be found in the *Catéchisme de Meaux*, by Bossuet. He is speaking of the churches, temples of God, and puts the question: "Why is the anniversary of the dedication of the church celebrated? That reverence for the holy places and the mysteries daily celebrated in them may be renewed in the hearts of the faithful. Again why? That each one of the faithful may renew the memory of the blessed day on which he was dedicated to God.

"On what day were we dedicated to God?

"On the day of our Baptism, when we became living temples of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

"What should one do on this day?

"Renew baptismal vows, professing again faith in God, and promising to renounce the pomps and works of the devil; in other words, the vanities and corruptions of the world."

the glorious sepulchre which they had left—as the Master left his—resurrected and brethren of Christ.

From the baptistery they proceeded to the place where they had been confirmed, and at length re-entered the basilica properly so called for the celebration of the holy mysteries and the Eucharistic banquet. In the Lateran, the Pope's cathedral, towards the fifth century, a part specially reserved for Confirmation was built off from the baptistery, and attached to the basilica by a kind of cloister.

The object of this pilgrimage was to bring to mind the elevated dignity of God's children in those very places where they had been initiated into the Christian life.

Some people complain that the happy custom of *private Communions* detracts from the ceremonial impressiveness of *solemn Communion.*

Since force of circumstances demands it, why not attempt tactfully and little by little to turn the ancient first Communion ceremony into a feast for celebrating the coming of the child to *the fulness of Christian life?* Formerly, as we have seen, Baptism, Confirmation, and Communion were given together on the day on which one passed from the state of a catechumen to that of a Christian. In course of time the three sacraments have become disassociated. As the Christian life should grow into consciousness and vigour, when one goes from childhood to youth, why not institute at that period a feast which, as far as possible, would partake of the character of *the three sacraments of complete Christian initiation?*

The majority of children receive Confirmation with but little understanding of its rôle. Set in the solemnity of a single day, which would thus become the feast of Christian adolescence—between the renewal of baptismal vows and eucharistic Communion—the sacrament of Confirmation would be better understood. The responsibilities undertaken at Baptism would be regarded more earnestly;

since Christ willed to establish a special sacrament for intensifying the presence of the Holy Spirit and the graces we derive from him at Baptism, he must have done it because our Christian life was in danger. What better means, then, could be devised of inducing the child to " live alive to danger," to resist temptation when it comes, than that of explaining the meaning of the words spoken over him on the day of his Baptism ?

" I exorcise thee, unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that thou go out and depart from this servant of God: for he who walked on foot upon the sea, and stretched out his right hand to Peter when sinking, commands thee, accursed one. Therefore, accursed devil, acknowledge thy sentence and give honour to the living and true God: give honour to Jesus Christ his Son, and to the Holy Ghost; and depart from this servant of God, because God, even our Lord Jesus Christ, hath deigned to call him to his holy grace and blessing, and to the font of Baptism." And again: " And this sign of the holy Cross which we make upon his forehead, do thou, accursed devil, never dare to violate, through the same Christ our Lord."

And as the very strength we receive on the day of our Confirmation is liable to exhaustion in the rough-and-tumble of our daily life, we are given a food, which is intended for our reception not on one day only, but as far as possible every day, as a guarantee of our courage to be faithful to the divine Trinity living in us. The sacred humanity of our Lord coming every day to mount duty in the holy of holies of our soul in a state of grace, and there making to the " Three " who live and dwell there the only offering, the only thanksgiving, the only expiation, the only prayer worthy of God, such is holy Communion. And at this action of the incarnate Son who comes to praise the Most High with us we are clearly associated with him, and with him we offer, we give thanks, we supplicate and make reparation.

And what better opportunity for establishing or for re-establishing the blessed Eucharist in our supernatural life than that of emphasizing on a solemn occasion his splendid and essential bond with the presence of the Holy Trinity come to reign in our hearts, thanks to the sacrament by which we are become Christian?

"I renounce Satan," says the child, and for the future he will repeat every day this formula, which should cease to be nothing but a formula to him: "I unite myself to Jesus Christ for ever."

And these words will mean for him: "I will unite myself as often as possible to God in the host, in order to be as faithful as I can to God dwelling in me. The two tabernacles, that of the altar and that of my heart, are two chosen dwelling-places, and the former is there only because of the latter. May the Holy Spirit of my Baptism and of my Confirmation himself prepare me for each coming of the Saviour, and may the Saviour ever better prepare me for the continual comings of the Holy Spirit."

In reality, almost all the *material* elements of the desired solemnity are present in the existing feast of the first solemn Communion, except Confirmation, which will be easily introduced when there is a good increase in the number of the ministers of the sacrament, as appears to us both desirable and in conformity with tradition.

What we propose is "to shift the accent."

To-day the child wears an armlet or a white robe. Why? If one only pays attention to the reception of the Eucharist, which was the old meaning of it, one must reply that it is because he receives our Lord for the tenth or one-hundredth time. And such a reply is in every way unsatisfactory. If one has to wear a special costume for Communion, let it be when one receives our Lord for the first time; but why after three, four, five years of Communion?

If the solemnity of the feast is declared to be for the purpose of emphasizing, so far as the child is concerned, the

importance of his fully conscious and intentional entry into the Christian life, then one can quite well understand the meaning of the armlet and white robe—in short, of all the traditional outward show.

The feast, so far *touching*, theoretically becomes, on this supposition, supremely *virile*. We are now no longer concerned so much with giving pleasure to a child as of making him undertake an *honourable engagement*.

And in explaining the meaning of the ceremony to the elect, one would insist less on *present* happiness than on *future* responsibilities; instead of getting lost in extensive but hardly convincing considerations, by explaining—perhaps for the three-hundredth time to the person in question—that he must prepare for this Communion with quite extraordinary fervour, one would take the child back to his Baptism—that is, to the beginnings of the supernatural life in him—and explain to him the necessity of knowing this life, of watching it, of protecting it, of increasing and intensifying it to the uttermost, and to that end of receiving the sacrament which keeps one's faith whole and strengthens one's weakness.

Nearly all children know what the Eucharist is. Nearly all are ignorant of what Baptism is (and its complement, Confirmation). Would it not be well that the religious solemnity intended to give a start to youth be cast in the rediscovered mould of the ancient Christian initiation, "*the feast of the divine Life within us*"?

The ceremonies themselves would recall the three principal moments of this divine life in us: when it is born; when it reaches maturity; when it draws indefinitely on the sap which keeps it full of life; and the child would understand, because of the two sacraments which can only be received once, the profound reason of the sacrament which he should receive every day.

III

However, the faithful must have the incomparable value of their Baptism made clear to them. After once having felt an assured sense of our own greatness, we give way less, we are less quick to consent to diminish ourselves, to reduce ourselves to nothing, to make ourselves cheap. A conscious experience of personal dignity prevents giving way utterly—not always, alas! but often if one has any nobleness of heart.

A great part of our spiritual life is spent in struggling. What a weakness to put in the field, against the driving and living force of passion, nothing but theoretic, dry, and meagre formulas.

The characteristic of temptation, and, above all, of some temptations, is to unsettle the whole man, the whole soul. What a weakness that against the violent outbursts of an entire world in revolt we can only set up a cold adhesion which merely moves a small corner of the most vital region of the soul, an anæmic adherence to a formal "Thou shalt not," which has neither flesh, nor bones, nor warmth, nor beauty.

One must be able to struggle against passion on equal terms: to fight passion, not with a notion, but with passion. To the thought of pleasure one must oppose the sense of loss which follows it; to the hope of acquisition which imagination paints in such golden colours, the vital certainty of what we shall forfeit, for a stedfast spirit of faith reminds us of its essential greatness.

It is certain that the motives of our faith cannot be always *present*. . . . Some people, in face of each doubt, would want to have all the processes of faith at hand; before each temptation of discouragement, the processes of hope; before each temptation against chastity, the unassailable memory of the reasons for being pure. . . . Impossible!

What can and ought one to wish for? *To have had* at moments, the warm and illuminating presence in the spirit. It may be that the heat cools and the rays become dim. The ashes soon manage to cover up everything again in our earthly life. But the *afterwards* benefits from the *before.* One cannot always see, or at least one may not always be able to see it. What a help to have seen, if one saw as one should. It is enough to keep us on the road and help us forward. The explanation of the wise men always holds good: *Vidimus, venimus,* "we saw, we came."

Of course we want the star never to leave the pilgrim. It would be childish to count too much on it. He must live on the acquired reserves of resplendent faith.

Hence the importance of having contemplated sometimes —often—the radiant beauty of the supernatural life. One becomes severe afterwards against accepting that which would make one lose it. An occasional thrill of admiration is curiously apt to make one always be on the alert.

Writing on active service, a French naval officer[1] thus addressed his wife: "What is difficult and necessary in life is not to detach oneself; it is to have one's heart full, to be delivered as far as possible from the danger of self." This thought is far-reaching. One would be much more easily detached if one were ever truly attached. We would be more ready to consider nothing as nothing when we had once understood—though only for a moment—that which is all, and if in entire loyalty—if only for a moment—this cry had sprung up from the depths of one's being: "So much is it nothing, all that is not Him."

Asceticism makes use of terror, and the dogma of eternal punishment. With the memory of the Passion one makes use of pity. Why should not one rather make use of the third of the three great tragic resources, admiration?

[1] Lieut. Dupovey.

Disce sanctam superbiam, wrote St Jerome to the Christian virgin Eustochium. " Learn to be holily proud." And St Gregory's: " Recognize, O Christian, thy greatness."

Let us, therefore, enrich these conceptions of " Christian," of " Baptism," of " supernatural life," of " divine life," with all the gifts which the faith affords us. Let them be no longer *dead* notions, but *living* realities. We shall acquire the difficult art of fastening all our powers of life on to the formulas of our faith.

Let us try to fortify our conceptions of divine things; otherwise, when they become bloodless, anæmic, they will be overcome by fleshly and living passions.

Our souls must become catholic, and furnished with the catholic spirit—*i.e.*, all the centres around which our ideas, our judgements, our feelings crystallize, must be made catholic.

Our conception of the world is too often pagan, because we do not get beyond the visible, and the only thing on earth that interests God—God in souls, that is—has no interest for us. Let us get used to giving to the *real* its true value, and to regarding the kingdom of the Most High in our soul and in the souls of others as the one thing necessary.

Nunc filii Dei sumus, said St John.[1]

Nunc, I am, at the moment of speaking, a son of God. *Now*. . . . Can I truly say that? Am I in a state of grace? Yes. Then I, now, am a true son of God. What a miracle!

Filius Dei, a true son of God. What does that mean? That God lives his life in me. In him who is in me, I am allowed to take part in this life.

Sumus, and that is a fact, an actuality, something that truly exists. *I* and *son of God*, I examine these two ideas. I compare them, I bring them together . . . they agree.

[1] 1 Joan. iii 2.

" Man is (by Baptism) so very much a part of God, that in comparison with this new ownership, this other (the result of creation alone), which we already held to be so binding, no longer seems to be of any account. Think well of it: they are to God ' strangers ' and, so to speak, ' barbarians,' wrote St Paul regarding the unbaptized; ' being outside the covenant,' they are no part of the family, and live as without God in the world (Eph. ii 12). What, then, is this connection set up by Baptism between God and man ?"[1]

How painful to observe that for six months one is capable of studying a treatise on *grace* or the *Word incarnate*, without having been once astonished, once moved, without having wondered once or once been touched to the quick. One has felt nothing but decay, nakedness, and death. Theological treatises file past us, gorgeous flowers, but museum specimens. And yet they should be the interpreters to us of such rich, living realities. Whence comes it that one lives in these realities so little ? And what a strange faculty has man of cutting himself in half, of being in continual mental contact with God without perhaps once thinking of God, without perhaps once uniting himself to God.

The monograph of a young Benedictine,[2] a novice under Dom Marmion, the well-known author of *Christ the Life of the Soul*, shows with the utmost charity how one can live dogma in proportion to one's study of it.

Let us protect ourselves from this easy trick of separating what we study from our practical life. Let us live what we learn. There is no way by which we can learn better.

Statements which are didactic and enthusiastic, methodical and affecting, in no wise blend. But the fact that they do not does not mean that they are isolated.

Through meditation we must raise the dead, resuscitate

[1] Gay, *Vie et vertus chrétiennes*, t. ii, *de la Charité*, p. 89.
[2] *Une âme bénédictine, Dom Pie de Hemptinne.*

Jesus Christ, and turn a formula of Denziger or a passage of Migne into a principle of action.

Unhappy the knowledge which does not change into love. Let us not approach the truth with only half of our soul, above all when that truth is in question. It is not too much to give all of ourselves to its conquest.

BOOK IV

PRACTICAL UNDERSTANDING OF OUR INCORPORATION WITH CHRIST JESUS

CHAPTER I

SIN IN A CHRISTIAN LIFE

I. *We make but "one with Christ," the destroyer of sin.*
II. *Whence comes the "gravity of sin" in a member of Jesus Christ?*
III. *Happy possibility of "pardon" after sin. The sacrament of "Penance" incorporates us again with Jesus Christ.*

I

TO have the life divine in our souls, to have in ourselves the Holy Ghost, the Father, and the Word—all by the merits of Jesus Christ, with whom it is granted us to be one—shall we on earth ever understand the nature and extent of such a privilege?

According to St Paul, only in heaven shall we see in all its clarity the greatness of the Christian, "when the Son of God, who is our life and our glory, shall appear."[1]

But such nobility, like all others, and indeed more than others, has its corresponding obligations.

"Shall we continue in sin? . . . God forbid. For we that are dead to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? Know you not that we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death? For we are buried together with him by baptism unto death: that, as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in

[1] Col. iii 4.

the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, and that we may serve sin no longer. For he that is dead is justified from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also with him ; knowing that Christ rising again from the dead dieth now no more ; death shall no more have dominion over him. For in that he died to sin, he died once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God: so do you also reckon that you are dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ."[1]

Thus fourteen times in these ten or eleven verses does St Paul repeat, as though sounding the death knell of our long-standing evil habits, the word death.

And this is not just a casual text, casual counsel, an *obiter dictum.* No ; it is his pet idea. He says : " Strip yourselves of the old man and put on the new " (Col. iii 9, 10). The Apostle never writes a letter without saying again and again to Christians : " Do not forget, you are dead. Christians of Ephesus, you are dead. Christians of Rome, you are buried with Christ by Baptism in his death. Christians of Corinth, regard yourselves as dead. Mortify your members, Christians of Colosse, for you are dead."[2]

Our timidity is dismayed by such persistence. We have but to understand it once, this name of death, synonym here of mortification, of renunciation, which wounds us and sets us trembling. St Paul walks over our fears and scruples. He has understood only too well, since the light on the road to Damascus, that our sanctification is the goal of Christ's efforts, and also that this sanctification is only possible if we leave a place free for Christ. That demands *detachment* on the part of the Christian.

Jesus Christ once died for us—died that we might merit life. We on that day also died—died by anticipation, died

[1] Rom. vi 1-12.
[2] Rom. vi 11 ; 2 Cor. v 14 ; Eph. xi 15 ; Col. iii 3, 5.

because of our destined goal. "One died for all," explains St Paul, "therefore all are dead."[1] And what is this but to say that on that day, having become "potentially" members of him who is the destroyer of sin, we have *ipso facto* incurred the obligation of destroying sin in ourselves?

Each Christian, when he is baptized, undertakes on his own account, and very particularly, this universal and long-standing obligation. It is erroneous to think that there is need of sacerdotal promises or religious vows before one can be said to live detached, "if one wishes to live" in Christ. Our Baptism alone demands it.

St Jerome, recalling the known texts of the Apostle to the Romans: "I beseech you that you present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God, . . . your reasonable service;"[2] and of St Peter: "You have received an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God, through Jesus Christ,"[3] calls Baptism *the priesthood of the laity*, to indicate that there is the starting-point of our calling to sacrifice.

And is it not singularly eloquent, this solemn rite which consecrates "to whiteness" the soul of every Christian from the moment that the holy water has been poured out, purifying the original stain? "Receive this white garment, and see thou carry it without stain before the judgement-seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou mayest have eternal life."

At the critical periods of Christian life one again comes across this white garment—white at Baptism, white at first Communion, white at marriage, and for priests the daily white of their alb and their altar-cloth.

And what a mistake to see nothing in all this but adornment. It is much more. It is a symbol.

A subaltern from St Cyr understood this. As he was starting for the front and about to say good-bye to his people, he wanted to leave them a remembrance. Plucking a red

[1] 2 Cor. v 14. [2] Rom. xii 1. [3] 1 Pet. ii 5, 9.

feather from his " cassowary," " Take it, father," he said; " 'tis the colour of blood. I will be brave "; then a white feather: " This is for you, mother. I will be ever faithful to God."[1]

II

How many of those who are baptized take as much care as this soldier-boy, to be so strict in obeying God, and resolve never to consent to mortal sin? Are they aware, when they seriously give way to evil, to what vileness they are abandoning themselves?

St Paul does not mince matters, he calls sin " adultery." Never has this horrible thing been better defined, for it is a forcible expulsion of the Holy Ghost, dwelling in us to incorporate us to Jesus Christ, for the union which he contracts with us at Baptism is such that marriage is only a faint symbol of it. Sin is adultery: and this is not ignorance of the subtleties of language, neglect of fine shades, a speech let slip by one who is doubtless fiery, though ignorant of the etiquette of oratory, suitable handling of style, or good manners.

Saul of Tarsus had studied in the schools; he had some social position. He employs vigorous language, because the truth to be expressed demands it. Then he does not hesitate. " But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy.[2] For the temple of God is holy, which you are."

We ought to glorify and carry God in our body, treat ourselves everywhere as reliquaries of his divine majesty. " Having therefore these promises (of dwelling in us by *grace*)," says the Apostle again, " let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting sanctification in the fear of God."[3]

Christians must be turned away from sin, from the sin of impurity in particular, all carnal, and therefore opposed to

[1] *Livre d'or du Collège d'Antoing.*
[2] 1 Cor. iii 17.
[3] 2 Cor. vii 1.

the presence in us of God, who is pure spirit; and be shown how the defilement of our members is an insult to Jesus Christ—our members which are his. And the Apostle insists. In our modern phraseology, his words offend our susceptibilities. Alas! why does not the *thing* which his words represent rather offend us, we whose body at Baptism became a part of the body of Christ? Here is St Paul's expression: "How, then, shall I make of the members of Jesus Christ the members of a harlot? God forbid." The antithesis, which in writing revolts us, in life does not—at least, if we observe how certain people," says St Chrysostom, "do not hesitate to make the members of a Man-God the members of a base wretch."

Helped by our weakness, we fail to get at the fundamental meaning of sin. The first Christians hated it more, because they better understood the meaning of it. We come across some curiously instructive indications of this. To show clearly how they understood this fundamental obligation of keeping their flesh free from all contact with impurity, they had adopted the habit of frequently "covering themselves with the sign of the cross," of continually making the symbol of redemption on their foreheads, their eyes, and their breasts, as though they wished to stamp them with the mark of the crucified one, in other words, of the impression and character of death; and after Communion, then received under both kinds, they were accustomed to take with the finger a little of the precious blood which remained on their lips, and moisten each of their senses with it.

Such was the faith of the early ages.

They did not admit that it was possible for a Christian to fall into mortal sin. Doubtless the physical possibility always existed; but such a moral disgrace was it, that one who was *born of God*[1] should be incapable of it. St John spoke thus: "He that committeth sin is of the devil."[2] "Whoever is born of God committeth not sin: for his

[1] 1 John iv 7, v 1. [2] 1 John iii 8.

seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."[1]

For John, to be a Christian and to permit oneself to sin was repellent, and he does the baptized the honour of thinking that he has given it up for ever: "Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world."[2] "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but the generation of God preserveth him; and the whole world is seated in wickedness," *totus in maligno positus est.*[3]

In the fourth century an attempt was made to include in the discipline of the Church the practice of refusing the further reception of Communion to one who had fallen into serious sin.

The Council of Elvira had declared that "those who continue to sin after penance must be excluded from Communion, even when *in extremis*."[4] The reason given is a weighty one: "Lest they may appear to play with the holy mysteries," *ne lusisse de Dominica communione videantur.*

This rigour, which was contrary to orthodoxy, could not stand. As often as man sins, so often can he, after absolution, receive the body and blood of Christ. But is the fact that the Church is less severe any reason why we should be less on our guard?

Who knows to what a grave sin may lead? Margaret Mary tells us that on one occasion, when making her annual confession, "she seemed to see and feel that she was being stripped, and at the same time clothed with a white robe." After holy Communion she seemed to hear our Lord say to her: "I have come, my well-beloved, to reclothe your soul with the robe of innocence, so that you may live entirely the life of a Man-God. . . . If you lose this grace but once you will never recover it, and you will fall into so deep an abyss, because of the high place in which I have placed you,

[1] 1 John iii 9.
[2] 1 John v 4.
[3] 1 John v 18.
[4] *Can.* iii, *Lab.*, t. i, col. 971.

which is the wound of my heart, that you will never be able to recover from such a fall."[1]

Doubtless our Lord used this language to the saint because he knew she could receive it, and he foresaw thenceforth her utter faithfulness. But the tempted soul, in danger of being carried away, will find this a beautiful subject for reflection.

Grave sin sometimes seems to us so light a matter.

At the thought of grave sin Christ sweated blood, and the saints sometimes suffered deadly agonies.

We should understand the tears shed by St Catherine of Siena, when she implored two rich Pisans to be faithful to God:

"To Vanni and Francis, sons of Nicolas de Buonconti of Pisa.

"In the name of Jesus crucified and of sweet Mary, most dear and well-beloved brethren in Jesus Christ, I, Catherine, the servant and slave of the servants of God, write to you and exhort you in the precious blood of his Son, with the desire of beholding you as his true children, living ever in the holy fear of God, and in such manner that you despise not the blood of Christ, but that you hold in horror and scorn that mortal sin which caused the death of the Son of God.

"He who delivers his body to impurity, after having known the perfect union which God has made with mankind, is guilty indeed.

"O Vanni, what an appalling thing, were death to overtake thee in mortal sin, if for one miserable pleasure thou wert to lose this benefit, this happiness, of having God in thy soul by grace, and of possessing immediately that eternal life which is for ever and ever."[2]

[1] *Life of the Saint, by her Contemporaries*, vol. i, pp. 90-91.
[2] *Lettres*, t. iii, Letter ccxlvii, p. 408.

III

Those who may have fallen—human weakness is so great, and God sometimes may allow us to fall to keep us always humble, and as a stimulus to love which might otherwise be enfeebled—and afterwards bravely risen again will have their courage restored by the thought of the mercies of God, the creator of a sacrament of pardon.

In truth, however rich one may think it, how incomplete a gift of charity is Baptism without the sacrament of Penance. Far more a cause of suffering than of joy, at least for many. After being made one with God, suppose we fall, without the power of rising again, without the possibility of recovering divine union, what a harrowing thing for a member of Christ; what inexpressible and endless regret at the irreparable loss of a unique treasure !

Our Lord has willed otherwise. By using our sins against themselves, he will make of them an instrument of salvation. To confess them is to obliterate them.

Oh, the incomparable power of absolution joined to an even imperfect repentance. To get rid of the last dam obstructing the Panama Canal twelve hundred and twenty-seven drills were used, forty tons of dynamite. It was only necessary for a switch to be turned in the White House three thousand miles away. One click, and two oceans were joined.

And how does this action apply to absolution ? A little cross traced in the darkness, and immediately two oceans meet, the oceans of a nameless wretchedness and that of a limitless mercy, and even outside of the sacrament of Penance, on condition that there be at least an implicit desire for absolution, thus works an act of charity or of perfect contrition: it is not much apparently, but such an impulse is enough to bring back life to a dead soul.

The poor wretched free will of man is therefore something great and valued by God.

If it be true that by it we can resist the Master of all things to the point of making Providence take stock of each grain of sand which we introduce by folly or malice into the ordered mechanism of the eternal scheme, and that during our earthly lives Providence accepts a kind of check, reserving a re-establishment of its rights for the final reckoning, it is none the less true that a single sincere impulse, a single cry of the soul, can open heaven, extract a pardon from God, and purify a conscience with the stains of forty years upon it.

God wills and " everything was made "—*Creation.* Man wills, and by divine permission an entire life is renewed. Regeneration, that is to say, *creation again*, and creation more lovely in a way than the first.

Christ wills, and Lazarus rises from the dead. Man wills, and Lazarus also arises. Man, at his command, can untie his own winding-bands and come living out of his own tomb.

The power of a repentant Magdalen or good thief ! And what a world is this hidden world of souls, where, every moment, if there are consciences which crumble and dung-heaps which accumulate, hearts are reborn and supernatural lives flourish again.

And if there is no repentance, are we to be astonished at the verdicts of heaven ? God had dreamed of making us partakers of his life. This life we will have nothing of. When our temporal life comes to its close, we are transported from the region of meritorious acts to that of the unchangeable. God looks at us. Do we bear his sign ? No; we are no longer of his family, we no longer have the sign of the Father's children, we are strangers. Must we be astonished, then, that when finding us as we are he pronounces *Nescio vos?* I know you not, I do not know who you are. Depart. Only the children of God can be with God. You are not children of God. *Nescio vos.* I spurn you for ever. *Ite in æternum.*

One imagines that God chastises the sinner in order to punish him. There is no need of chastising him. He has only to be left to himself, to his unlicensed will. . . . Man has refused to accomplish the will of God, that he may for ever accomplish his wish to be without God. *Fiat voluntas tua, homo, in æternum.*[1]

Mortal sin is the divorce between man and the divine Guest of the soul. But it rarely shows itself all at once; generally a kind of progressive disaffection, a cooling off, a succession of *venial* failings, have preceded it.

A mortal sin is rarely in one's life a monumental stone, standing up alone in the middle of an uninterrupted plain. Usually there are other and smaller stones round about in great numbers. The giant is not isolated.

Or put it another way, if you will. In the spiritual life one rarely dies suddenly. In the majority of cases the heavy fall only occurs after a series of small weaknesses. The links are allowed to slacken one by one, and one fine day the chain breaks. It is fatal. And it is not even necessary that the rust attack all the links. It is enough that one only be corroded and lose its strength. " The strength of a chain lies in its weakest link "; upon this axiom is based the entire theory of the dominant defect, the demonstrable danger of frequent venial sins.[2]

It would be difficult to be too hard on these small weaknesses when they occur deliberately and wilfully. Perhaps no one has treated the subject better than Margaret Mary. We know on what terms our Lord had put her on her guard against every wilful neglect. Doubtless she had this warning in mind when writing as follows:

" What I most approve of in all that your love tells us is

[1] St Thomas, in iv Sent., lib. ii, dist. 37, q. iii, a. 1, shows clearly that sin, in so far as it deprives man of God, is already the punishment of privation of the sight of God.

[2] The meditation on *Judas*, in the *Retraite* of P. Longuehaye, particularly applies to this subject.

your strong sense of persecuted grace amongst so many relapses, because that indicates that God has a strong desire to save your soul, though he will never do so without your co-operation. That is why he fails not to caress you; for if we always think of resisting him, he will at length get tired of seeking us, and will gently withdraw from us, and we shall live as though unconscious of our loss. That is why, if to-day you hear the voice of the Lord, harden not your heart, and endeavour to profit by the retreat you are about to make for this end, by a strong and efficacious resolution to conquer yourself, by doing yourself continual violence, in order to become detached from yourself. But commit no voluntary faults if you wish to re-enter into the good grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, otherwise you will look for him in vain, for he will mock us, just as we have mocked his grace. . . ."

And at the end of her letter: "Alas! my dear sister, could we but understand the damage we do to our poor soul by depriving it of so many graces, and exposing it to so obvious a danger by these frequent voluntary falls. God closes the door of his Sacred Heart to it.

"Let us take advantage of the time he gives us, and delay no longer."

At the end of the retreat she says:

"Divine love is sufficient to prevent us from doing anything which might be displeasing to our soul's Well-beloved, for it passes my comprehension how a soul belonging to God, truly wishing to love him, can of set purpose offend him. I swear to you that deliberate sins are insufferable to me, because they wound the heart of God. Take care, then, I beg of you, not to commit them; for they deprive you of the benefit of graces, the loss of which enfeebles your heart and greatly turns aside your soul from the way of perfection.

"The Lord loves you, and desires to see you advance with giant strides along the paths of his love, even at the cost of

crucifying nature. Do not therefore bargain with him, but give him everything, and he will see that you regain it all in his divine heart. It is a good sign when grace follows close at our heels; but let us be fearful, lest it tire and leave us. . . ."[1]

Chapter II

CHRISTIAN RENUNCIATION

I. "*Renunciation,*" *a matter of* "*prudence.*" *If original sin is destroyed, the possibility of actual sin continues.*
II. *A matter also of* "*the imitation of our Lord.*"
III. *Renunciation, rightly understood, means happiness.*

I

BAPTISM is a sacrament which gives the death-blow to sin. It obliges the Christian to an *entire* separation from all that may, so far as he is concerned, cause harm to Jesus Christ.

But a very large field opens up beyond this degree of strict obligation. The Christian, a member of Christ, must concern himself not only with what in him may *harm* Jesus Christ, but also with what in him *is not* of Jesus Christ.

Separation—*at least affective*—from every created thing is what the full terms of the Christian rule of life exact.

God has placed us in a setting of more or less attractive visible life, in a setting of appearances the import of which it is vital that we should properly grasp. Let us not take a painted cardboard scene for the real thing. We can make use of the *sensible*, but "as having nothing."[2] The gifts of fortune, the pleasures of the hearth, the legitimate satisfaction of independence, all these things God places at our disposal; and if he does not ask every one of us to separate

[1] *Letters*, lxxii and lxxiii, ed. Paray, t. ii, pp. 169-171 and 174.
[2] 2 Cor. vi 10.

ourselves *effectively* and *fully*—which is the way of the evangelical counsels—we are at least bidden not to cleave to these things, and to be ready to sacrifice ourselves, in fact, in sundry small ways if only to try the sincerity of our detachment of heart.

Without that there is no true life " in Christ."[1]

So much so, that without the *spirit of renunciation* we are ever exposed to a return of the powers of evil.

True it is, indeed, that at the moment when, on the Cross, our Lord destroyed sin, we died *in him* to sin, and that Baptism has obtained for us the benefit of this *radical* death.[2] But all our lives we have to die to the sin *in us*—that is to say, to carry out in the practical detail of our personal lives this root destruction undertaken by the Head.

Original sin is destroyed in every baptized person in a state of grace, but the possibility of actual sin continues.

" However much I may wish to do good," wrote the Apostle, " an overwhelming inclination to evil pursues me:"[3] and us, also, far more. Hence to *affective* detachment must be added *effective* detachment, to the proper extent.

The old wound is closed; but it is still true that we have been wounded, and the mark of the old sore is a good indication of the weak spot for the enemy to strike home. So we must ever be on the alert, and continually labour to kill the germs of incipient corruption at the edges of a scar. One slip, and gangrene may supervene. We must watch.

We are all of us like Tarcisius carrying God in the midst of the heathen. Only the hostile powers are *in* us rather than *around* us. We must ever fear a rising, a revolt. The instincts which appear to be tranquilly playing at quoits may

[1] We would refer our readers to two studies summed up in the form of *Plans* in the *Dossiers de l'action populaire*, 51, Rue Saint-Didier, Paris; *L'Eglise catholique et la vertu de pénitence* and *Le Christ a-t-il mutilé la nature humaine?*

[2] We use *radical* here in the etymological sense: *in the root.*

[3] Rom. vii 15, 19.

unexpectedly awake, leap upon us, and try to stone the treasure of which we are the divine guardians by Baptism.

"Every Christian carries on his lips the kiss of Judas, and one day he may give it."[1] Who has not felt himself sometime or other capable of treason? Who has not trembled at times on perceiving within himself that strange faculty of being able to say *no*, when God demands *yes*, and with his queer dwarfish power of reducing God's strength to temporary impotence?

Every day we are attacked by sin from within or from without. Every day we have to repel the attack with loss.[2] The victor can only seek rest when he has no more land to conquer, but is carried from sacrifice to sacrifice and from endeavour to endeavour according to the measure of his triumph.[3]

Having become at Baptism "a new creature in Jesus Christ," it would certainly be more restful to have to work no more to be in Jesus Christ. But this world is not the final land of promise: only our "goal" will be the land of things unchangeable. Here below, to be in Jesus Christ one must perpetually die to what is not Jesus Christ. The heart of man prefers one day's work, however hard, to long drawn out labour, less mortifying at each instant, but the very duration of which causes a feeling of heavy monotony. Is there a chance of attack? . . . To the trench. This will be tough work, but afterwards comes rest. So be it. . . . But to tramp indefinitely through a tiresome region with a dull view? . . . Better than roasting over a slow fire, is death once for all.

This, however, is not the lot that awaits us. We are not asked to make a sacrifice once for all, but whenever necessary, and that is often.

[1] Mgr. Hugh Benson, *Christ in the Church*, p. 176.
[2] *Renovatur de die in diem* (2 Cor. iv 16).
[3] *In virum perfectum, in mensuram ætatis plenitudinis Christi* Eph. iv 13).

Hence the advice of all the masters.

" *Go against the grain*," says St Ignatius, and his *furia* only frightens those timid souls, so concerned to reach the fulness of life in Christ, but concerned in no wise to make use of this energetic and only means of achieving their object.

" Lord," says Fénelon, " I am on your side against myself." And St Francis de Sales: " I will do with my whole heart what my whole heart wants me not to do."

So that there be no misunderstanding, Origen insists on sustained effort. " Do not believe that you change your life all at once: *neque enim putes quod innovatio vitæ quæ dicitur semel facta, sufficiat.* No, no; every day we have to renew this newness of life: *semper et quotidie ipsa novitas innovanda est.*" A passage which is thus commented upon by Bossuet in his *First Easter Sermon:* " Since the Apostle speaks to you only of death and the tomb, do not think that he only asks an indifferent change of you. . . . He wishes to make you understand that we must apply the knife to our most natural inclinations."

And to conclude with a master among masters. " Oh to leave self, to die to oneself, in order to come to thee," says St Augustine. *O ire, o perire, o ad te pervenire*—at all costs, Lord, at all costs.

II

Moreover, for the hard toil of these severe prunings we have the divine model, Jesus himself.

" What?" cries Bossuet, redoubling by his oratorical energy the overwhelming exhortations of the Apostle; " you expect, Christians, to save yourselves amidst pleasures. Do you, then, presume to save yourselves without wearing the character of the Saviour? Do you not understand St Paul, who bids you to be 'made conformable to his death that you may attain to his glorious resurrection'?[1] Do you not understand

[1] *Configuratus morti ejus : si quo modo occurram ad resurrectionem quæ est ex mortuis* (Phil. iii 10).

that Jesus Christ himself tells you that to march under his flag you have to carry your cross, even as he carried his? And this reason should sufficiently convince us: 'If we are duly in fellowship with Jesus Christ.'"

And how strict a fellowship, since it is called *incorporation*. We are, says the Apostle, "flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone." Our Saviour's life was one of renunciation.—Just think of this simple phrase only: *Christus non sibi placuit*. Christ pleased not himself.—Hence, should we deserve the name of Christians, if our life did not follow Christ's —from afar, certainly, but none the less in some sort like his?

"Let us grasp so great a mystery; let us enter deeply into this thought. Jesus Christ suffering carries us in himself; we are, if I may dare so to express myself, more his body than his own body, more his members than his own members. Whoever has the spirit of charity and of Christian communion will understand clearly what I mean. What takes place in his divine body is the true figure of what ought to happen within us."

Moreover, be it understood, when we speak of the Cross, of carrying one's cross, of mortification, we are not concerned with blood and the austerities of the desert Fathers. For it could never be anything but the exception that a chosen few should seek after strong doses of renunciation, and dream of being entirely "Christ"; and when Bossuet, carried away by his own eloquence, cries out, after showing us Christ on the Cross, "The faithful, who are his members, ought to be dripping blood from head to foot,"[1] we must understand what these words mean, and we shall point out their meaning later on.

Here we mean to give nothing but the principle.

The supernatural life flows into us by the wounds of Jesus. They show exactly where our wretched nature is grafted on his sacred humanity. The grafting point is always a wound.

[1] Bossuet, *Œuvres oratoires*, ed. Lebarq, t. iii, pp. 697-698.

Shall we concede that the wound is on one side only; that the trunk was mutilated and the branch intact; that the humanity of our Lord was opened by the nails and the spear; and that our humanity knows nothing of the painful rents of the sacrifice?

"O most sweet Saviour," humbly entreated Fr. Eudes in a prayer inspired by clear understanding of our life in Christ, "since by an excess of thy wonderful kindness thou art pleased to be our head, and that we are thy members, grant by this same kindness that we may both live the life of our head and die his death.

"Thou compelledst us to this when thou didst incorporate us with thee in holy Baptism, making us solemnly profess and promise to cleave to thee, to follow thee everywhere, and be therefore, in imitation of thee, victims destined to the sacrifice of thy glory."[1]

With that fine clearness of vision which follows an idea to its logical conclusion the author of the preceding lines has covered his route with blood in order to clear a way, and he goes to the length of concluding that "the grace of Baptism is a martyr's grace."

Rather than exclaim that this is exaggerated, we may affirm that, though perhaps with somewhat more obvious urgency and less attention to delicacy of touch, we have here St. Paul thinly disguised.

III

In view of the above must it be said—and, indeed, some have raised the objection—that Christianity is a barbarous religion, a religion of annihilation, a kind of inhuman apotheosis of suffering? The crucifix in the doctrine of Christ really occupies too important a place. It dominates,

[1] Abbé Granger, *Abrégé du royaume de Dieu*, pp. 143, 151.

it invades, it crushes. A strange " good news " this of the Gospel, this " news " of having to drag all our lives long this galley-slave's chain, the cross.

Let us confess it. Speaking of sacrifice is by no means an easy matter. And this difficulty has two sources—the speaker's and the listener's.

The *speaker's.* What man is there who dares to remind others that a cross one day came into the world, and that each one of us in his turn has to bear this cross on his shoulder ? What sign of Christian renunciation does his life bear ? What detachment does he practise that he may induce others to a like practice ? When life is opposed to teaching, teaching has little weight. Sanctity is necessary. Where are the saints ?

Then we have the difficulty of *those who listen.* Very soon they find that the obligation of Christian sacrifice is put before them in too abrupt or urgent a manner, and they become discouraged. Or, if they seem to be going too fast, they turn round and take to a Christianity without the Cross.

Between these two dangers what is the *true position?* Let us look at the Gospel closely. It speaks there of the necessary sacrifice, not assuredly as " *an end,*" but as a " *means,*" the only means, of arriving at this divine end, union with the risen Christ.

Renunciation has but a relative beauty. It is good for what it gives, and not for what it takes away. It takes away certain concrete possessions; but we must look farther than the concrete, and find the riches which the sacrifice of the concrete brings to us.

Far from darkening life, the renunciations demanded by the Saviour transfigure and illuminate it.

The word Gospel must be kept in its etymological sense. Its real meaning is " good news." First, because it is a hope, for that " which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us *above measure exceedingly*

an eternal weight of glory."[1] Then because from here and now it guarantees the fulness of true life, substantial joys, and the peace which looks down on shoddy pleasures. Man has to sacrifice only things of lesser value. What he will obtain by sacrifice will be a deeper *likeness to God*, a little more of *God* in us.

This is what we have to see clearly. Set phrases terrify us. Let us probe them to the bottom. The impression they give is that of preaching a massacre. In reality they proclaim the establishment of a kingdom. It is a question of death, but solely to guarantee the triumph of life, of the life that Christ came to restore to us, of life that is written with a capital letter, His Own Life.

Beyond doubt it must be taught—and as St Paul pointed out, *importune, opportune—i.e.*, as need arises, the contrary desire of our egotism notwithstanding—that the grace of the Saviour Jesus is a grace of *death;* that the spirit of Christianity is a spirit of *death;* that the inclination of the Christian should be towards *death;* that it is towards *death*—in the above indicated sense, be it understood—that our inclinations should be directed, for Christians, being members of Jesus, must necessarily follow their crucified head. But one must remember to repeat at the same time that the grace of the Saviour Jesus is a grace of *life;* that the tendency of the Christian should be towards *life;* and that towards *life* his inclinations should be directed, for, as members of Jesus Christ, we are members of him who said: " I am the truth; and I declare this to you, I am *the Life.*"

This is the divine revenge of the religion of *joy* preached by the Man *of Sorrows.*

Sublime and consoling paradox: the Christian's life must be life and death together, and a death that it may be life—*the* life. To sacrifice is not to die, but to destroy death; suppression if you will, but only of the obstacle to life; to expand it by bursting its limits. The sacrifice of all excess

[1] 2 Cor. iv 17.

of this life is the science of life. Cut the parasitic and strangling weed and the corn will grow straighter, the grain will hold more nourishment.

Sacrifice the passion of the moment, the present sensation, the hourly caprice, the empty accidents of the substance of life, and you will obtain full, deep, concentrated life. . . . Here is the mystery of the Cross: Christian sacrifice, mortification, death in Jesus Christ, and what is also called the risen life.

Carrying out his thought, Fr. Gratry boldly concludes: "Whoever has not practised to-day the *quotidie morior* has wasted his day."[1]

Better than his teaching, St Paul convinces us with example. Nobody lived the *quotidie morior* better than he.

What a grand contempt was his for all created things, what fervour in his love of the Cross. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? . . ."[2] The Jesus of whom he speaks he well understands to be Jesus crucified.[3]

But against these texts, and in close dependence upon them, are these others: "We who are alive shall arise and be for ever with Christ."[4] "Here we are absent from the Lord. . . . We would rather be absent from the body and be present with the Lord."[5] Were it not that the keeper of the flock requires his presence here below, he would wish "to be dissolved and to be with Christ."[6] Here below we become "a new creature in the Lord." Finally, he exclaims: It is done! All Paul has vanished.—And in a superb adjuration to all created powers, trusting in his Christ who has become his end-all and be-all, he cries out: "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present,

[1] P. Gratry, *La philosophie du credo*, pp. 158, 159.
[2] Rom. viii 35. [3] 1 Cor. ii 2. [4] 1 Thess. iv 16.
[5] 2 Cor. v 6-8. [6] Phil. i 23; 2 Cor. v 17.

nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, shall take away my Christ Jesus. Never. I defy you to separate me, even for one single moment, from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord."[1]

Having cleared up this point and defined our terms, we run less risk of calling the Cross a scandal; it is a scandal only to pagans and paganized Christians. We are in less danger of calling renunciation a useless barbarity.

The Cross is a mystery, but one which, if it frightens much, shocks less. Renunciation is renunciation, but at this point it is so mixed up with the spiritual welfare of our nature here below, that, for those who understand, it may be transmuted into profound rejoicing. What we lose of exuberance of inferior life we gain in the richness of a life that is higher. To replace a little earth by some large nooks of heaven, is that a fool's bargain?

Baptized Christians, do not let us forget that a noteworthy phrase was pronounced over us on the day of our Baptism by the priest who sanctified us as a member of Jesus Christ. "May he serve thee *joyfully* in thy Church." This is a command. By vocation, and because he is charged to live as a member of Christ, the Christian becomes an official guardian of true joy. No one can snatch it from him, for it is his exclusive privilege if he lives in a state of grace. And, indeed, he who is intimately united to Jesus Christ to the point of possessing the same spirit as Jesus Christ, even in the midst of the greatest privation, lacks hardly anything.

At the Jordan, when Christ was being baptized, a voice was heard: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." This pleasure that the Father feels for his Christ is not limited to the person of the Saviour Jesus alone; rather it extends to all who are of Christ, not only to him who is the Head, but to all of his members.

[1] Rom. viii 38.

" When the fulness of time came," said the Apostle, " God sent his Son, who was born of a woman; he was subject to the law that he might redeem those who were under the law, and that the adoption of children might be accomplished in us." And this divine adoption incomparably surpasses human adoption, wherein the adopter can transmit none of his life to the adopted. Here, on the contrary, thanks to Jesus Christ, with whom we are incorporated, the very life of God is communicated to us—participated in, we must always remember—but *his very life.*

This word alone embraces all the theology of true joy. To know ourselves to be " *divine,*" to have the spirit of love, " members of Christ Jesus "—these expressions are worth something—and to live sadly? How meaningless! Of course, we may still be tainted by earthly wretchedness. But every moment of our lives we must have the means of giving realities their true values and right proportions.

When one sees the statue of Joan of Arc in the peristyle of Rheims at close range, and without noticing its setting, the pedestal, horse, and statue strike us as very large. View them from farther off, everything in its framework, and you would say an ant at the foot of a wall. Such is the aspect of our earthly troubles to him who refuses to see them isolated, but always with the imposing and dominating wall of the great divine life behind them, for this is our normal framework.

" May he serve thee *joyfully* in thy Church." The spirit of death, the spirit of sacrifice, the Christian spirit, these are but one and the same thing; as likewise the Christian spirit, the spirit of expansion and of joy, the spirit of life, are so like each other as to be equivalent.

Chapter III

JAM NON EGO . . . CHRISTUS—"NOW NOT I . . . BUT CHRIST!"

I. *The Christian "ideal": to realize the "not I" of St Paul.*
II. *"Difficulties" of the task.*
III. *Its "greatness": to become "an additional humanity" for Christ.*

I

BAPTISM is a sacrament "of death." To live one's Baptism one must continually die.

In what consists this death at each moment, which is really true life? This is what we have to see.

One word, easy to understand, difficult to practise, says everything. This life of death consists in the more complete renunciation of ourselves, and in more perfect dependence on Christ.

The life which is given us all at once, and which is *required* of us at Baptism, is one which becomes the continuation of that of the Man-God. In natural generation one receives the inclination of one's parents; at our supernatural regeneration we receive the inclinations of Jesus Christ. We should take no pleasure in what is not regenerated by him.

The world? We are no longer of the world.

"The whole world is seated in wickedness,"[1] St John warns us. Let us therefore take no part in what is not of our Lord. Our life must not be spent in the world, but "hidden in God with Jesus Christ."

One is no longer "Jew or Gentile," which must evidently be understood in the Apostle's sense.

The ideal? To become one with Christ.

The ideal, we say. For in practice, alas! how few could

[1] *Totus in maligno positus est* (John xviii 14; 1 John v 19).

reach these heights. But have we not already gone far when we see that the Christian life, properly understood, should aspire to them; and must it not be reckoned a great triumph of grace that here and there are those who in different degrees seek to realize the Christian ideal in its integrity, a few even to the highest point of self-sacrifice ?

Souls which are but little used to conquering themselves are astonished at seeing others reach up to the heights of renunciation. They fail to grasp the glory of our holy vocation. They do not realize what it is to aspire to full life " in Christ."

Seen from below, sacrifice seems like a cloud hanging heavily over life. Seen from above, for him who has pierced the cloud and put it under his feet, it marks the separation from all that is below, the approach to the fulness of light. To go through sacrifice is to discover worlds. But the plains must be left behind, the ascent risked, that we may enter the zone where a moment blots out everything, and we must be resigned to see the earth no more except from afar off.

And do we truly see it any the worse for that ?

We are far from suggesting renunciation for the sole motive of becoming more of a " man." The matter is quite otherwise. We must renounce ourselves to become more of a " Christ," to be only one with him.

We must *be one*, Christ and we. In so far as we are *we*, we *and* Christ, in so far as the copulative " *and* " holds good, we are not *one*, but *two*.[1]

Now Christ said: " Be *one*."

The solution is only possible if one of the two disappear. Hence St Paul so vigorously says: " Die."

When he invites us to wholesale slaughter, what does he

[1] *We* trust that we have sufficiently explained how this union or identification is to be understood; and St Paul in no wise seeks the absorption of the Christian personality by Christ to the point of suppression. The doctrine of the mystical body is not pantheistic.

ask of us but to put into practice the words given to John the Baptist: " He must increase, but I must decrease: *me autem minui.*"[1]

Decrease? Does St Paul use this word? Is that adequate for his love of the Master, for his ideal of the Christian? Not *Decrease.* . . . He must rather say *Disappear! Vivo ego, jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus*— " And I live, *now not I:* but *Christ* liveth in me."[2]

II

It would be unfair to conceal the struggle that is in front of us before we can reach the freedom of *jam non ego.* Perhaps this is also the explanation of why there are so few saints amongst so many Christians.

How many, even amongst the best, give perfect works to God? Self-love is so subtle.

One day Claudius Lavergne, wishing to paint a picture of the giving of the rosary to St Dominic for the Dominican Fathers of Toulouse, begged Père Lacordaire to give him a white habit which had been used to clothe his model. " I have what you want," said the Father, " and you will relieve my conscience. I have a robe which it is a weakness of mine to keep. I have not cared to have bits of it used for patching the others. . . . It is the one I used at Notre Dame when I pronounced the funeral oration of O'Connell and my sermon on the vocation of the French nation. Henceforth I will not desire to keep it. Here it is, take it."

If souls so thoroughly mortified as that of Lacordaire can have their small attachments for a season,[3] what must we think of ourselves?

[1] Joan. iii 30. [2] Gal. ii 20.
[3] Ready to punish themselves bitterly afterwards.

And precisely where we think we give everything we are sometimes lacking in straight dealing.[1]

Yet, if we aspire to the fulness of life, we must consent to the fulness of death. The *Imitation*, with its imperturbable and gentle sweetness, says: " My son, thou must give *all for all*, and be *nothing* of thyself."[2]

Obviously, this *all* can be, and in practice will be, very different in different souls. For some it can be an *entire all*, a complete detachment.

St Francis of Assisi one day hears a priest at Mass recite these words from the Gospel: " Possess neither gold, nor silver, nor purse, nor two garments, nor shoes." Forthwith he throws away with horror the purse in which he collected alms. He had shoes, off they come; a cloak to cover his tunic, away with it. . . . Shortly afterwards Clare Seifi explains to him that she also wishes to belong to Christ. " If you want me to believe in you," replied Francis, " you will do the following: you will dress in a sack, and go about the town begging your bread." Clare obeyed. The inhabitants did not know her. But Francis did.

[1] Here is a piquant example of these little disloyalties to which we are too often accustomed. The great composer Lulli was visited in his last illness by his confessor, who, before giving him absolution, constrained him to burn the score of a somewhat licentious opera on which he was working. He resisted for a long time, but finally gave in. When the confessor had gone, a visitor arrived and expostulated with the musician for the sacrifice he had made. Lulli smiled, and in a low voice said, " I've kept another copy."

A more innocent example is that of the Duchess of Doudeauville, foundress with Mlle. Rollat of Nazareth House, who had an extremely eccentric mother. On the evenings when there was dancing, of which she was very fond, believing it to be her duty as mistress of the house to see that everything finished up when the clock struck ten, she used to put back the clocks two hours, in order to keep things going until midnight. That went on for some time without anyone being surprised at finding it so late on their return home. Who has never kept a second copy, nor put the clock back ?

[2] Book III, ch. xxvii.

One day in Lent, at Vannes, Catherine de Francheville, whose name is always associated with the *Retreats*, was present at a sermon: "You say that you are Christ's. Prove it." These words struck her. She went to her friends to stir them up to serve God better. "As for me, I wish to be his entirely, and as an indication that I really mean it I beg you to cut off my hair." And as no one cared to undertake it, she did it herself. From this day "she felt that her heart was no longer divided, and her other sacrifices seemed to cost her nothing."[1]

For the large majority of souls the "*all*" that is required will be but a relative "*all*." God does not ask the same degree of renunciation from all of us. But don't imagine that we are going to make the lesser sacrifices without blood.

We don't mind giving a certain amount to God, provided that we can keep for ourselves the *only thing* he wants of us. St Ignatius quite clearly saw this instinct for keeping and holding which is inherent in every man, and hence his *Meditation of the Three Kinds of Men*, with the object of leading him who says, "Everything, but not that," to sacrifice "*that*."

"Any remedy you like," a young man whose sciatic nerve had been cut, and who ran the risk of never recovering the use of his leg, said to the chaplain, "but not *that*." The remedy was to search with pincers for the two ends of the nerve, skilfully bringing them together, counting on nature to effect a juncture. "But, my dear child, that is the only remedy that is any good; all others are useless. It will be painful, of course. But it is the only one." And the poor wounded man was a week before he would consent.—If we hesitated a week only when God requires a sacrifice!

[1] From her life, by Fr. Champion, *Mess. du C. de J.*, Nov. 1909, p. 649.

The privations which he asks of us most frequently differ from those we have imagined. Ordinarily, they are *in themselves* small. Our self-love does not dislike contemplating big sacrifices if we can spare ourselves at the moment.[1] We are easily apt to think that the most insignificant sacrifices are not worth while. And more often than not they are just what God wants; nothings, but nothings that distress and sometimes frighten. We resemble the child who promises to dispose of his luxurious toys to the poor, and when we go to the cupboard to pick them out, "No, not those," he says. "I am too fond of them." To know how to sacrifice small things is the surest indication of great energies.

One day St Magdalen of Pazzi was meditating on this verse of Isaias: "They shall take wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." And our Lord showed her those who do not go forward, or who progress but slowly; then those who go with some speed. Who are they? "Those who have charity, but are not entirely dead to themselves, because they do not seek my will absolutely in everything. They look for something at the same time that they look for me, but outside of me. . . . Those who run—oh, how rare are they! They are altogether dead to themselves; they seek not at all the knowledge of spiritual things for their own ends nor for desire of consolation, but in perfect conformity to my will. . . . Generally the speed of a race is proportionate to the life of the runner, but here, to his death. True, this death is the real Life which brings him into my bosom. . . . I wish to give thee here this dead life."[2]

How right was the Apostle when he said to his converts: "See your vocation."[3] You cannot ponder it carefully

[1] See on this Fénelon, *Avis spirituels*, No. xxii, *La parole intérieure*, Works, edit. Vivès, 1854, t. i, p. 605.

[2] III p., ch. ii. Quoted in Saudreau, *Les Divines paroles*, t. ii, p. 228.

[3] 1 Cor. i 26.

enough. And this vocation consists in having fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.[1] "To be one with Jesus Christ." To live as he lived "in imitation of the Holy One who has called us 'holy, as he himself is holy.'"[2] Living a life of pure resurrection, seeking ever the things that are above.[3] "Our conversation in heaven": *nostra conversatio in cœlis*.[4]

III

Since, as a Christian, I am but one with Jesus, what ought to be my dispositions when I act?

Ought I to force myself to live my life, or to live the life of the Son, who lives the life of the Father, the life of the "Three"? My life should continue that of Jesus Christ —my actions, that is to say, should be those of Christ: *Christianus alter Christus*.

Is it really so? Is it true that Christ is my life?

Where is the part of *Christ* in my life? Is it true that in my life the life of Christ is something living, the fundamental and first principle—perhaps not always explicit, but always existing—that the *alpha* and *omega* of all my deepest enthusiasms, of all my tendencies and my moments is the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it true that my liveliest care, not always explicit, but ever present, is to ask, "What would Jesus Christ do in my place? Where would his Spirit take him?" and to act indeed according to the reply received, since "whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."[5]

Fr. Natal, in his *Recollections of Meditations*, wrote: "We must unite ourselves with Christ to the point of asking ourselves on every occasion: Here, what would Christ do, how would he act? As though we were he."[6]

[1] 1 John i 3. [2] 1 Pet. i 15. [3] Col. iii 1.
[4] Phil. iii 20. [5] Rom. viii 14.
[6] *Ita inveniendus est Christus, ut in re qualibet sentiamus quid hic Christus ageret vel præsens consuleret: quasi Christum in*

He added: " To seek diligently this union with Christ by the Holy Spirit, that my intelligence may be his, my will his, my memory his, all my being his, all my life his, all that I do his. Such is the very perfection of perfection, and the great sweetness of life."[1]

One feast of the blessed Trinity he went to the Lateran and had the joy of seeing and touching the relics of our Lord, and he confesses that he saw clearly the exaggeration of his humility, and that his life was bad because it was not purely God's: *fere omnes operationes suas communiter esse peccata, propterea quod in Deo pure non fierent.* Thenceforward he decides to begin a new life, a recollected life, a life in the light, and what beautiful expressions he makes use of: *quietam, claram, suavem, ex intimo cordis sensu*—a life in the intimate union of the heart with God, the true life in Christ.[2]

" In truth," said St Margaret Mary, " it seems to me that all one's life consists in bringing oneself into conformity with the will of God, since he who clings to God is made of his very spirit." So she took the following resolution: " Let me always will what Jesus does, and always do what Jesus wills."

This is exactly what Jesus asks of us, that our life be in direct dependence upon his, that *he*, the Son of God, by his Spirit determine our thoughts, that he stir up our energies, that he take in his hands all the leading-strings of our conduct, until we be perfectly transformed into his image.

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nobis habitantem sentiremus. Et hoc est: nos autem sensum Christi habemus (*Mon. Hist. Soc. Jesu Epistolæ Patris Natal.*, t. iv, p. 684 no. 18).

[1] *Accipe atque exerce diligenter unionem quam tibi gratificatur spiritus Domini ad Christum Jesum, atque ejus potentias ut sentias in spiritu te per voluntatem velle, per memoriam recordari, totumque te et esse et vivere et operari, non in te sed in Christo : hæc est hujus temporis perfectio summa, virtus divina, admirabilis suavitas.—Ibid.*, p. 697, no. 163.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 702, nos. 201-202.

Then, and then only, shall we be able to say that we truly have " the mind of Christ,"[1] the apprehension that we are his double, that our humanity is given us simply that we may lend it to him, that it be he who shows himself through us, who lives in us.

A painter in Rome, while looking for a model to represent Christ in his picture of the Last Supper, comes across the beggar Benedict Labre. Exactly what he was looking for. Benedict Labre consented out of charity. After the death of the saint they wanted to preserve his features. But how ? Then the picture of the Last Supper was thought of. To recover the face of Benedict Labre, it was only necessary to reproduce that of Christ.

So our lives ought to be the tracing, the cast, the " double " of that of Christ Jesus, and when our actions are observed, not perhaps by men—they see so little below the surface—but at least by God, thus should the features of his well-beloved Son be found in each one of us.

The saying of Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity is well known: " Become *an additional humanity* for Christ "; in other words, let me put my entire being at the disposal of our Lord to do what he will with it, as his sacred humanity was constantly at the disposal of the Word.

What perfection of life does it not pre-suppose to so interpret Christ, and like him to do nothing " but in God," *ut manifestentur opera ejus quia in Deo sunt facta*, to use an expression of our Lord himself,[2] not only banishing the influence of all unruly passions, but even the influence of unaided nature, and banishing the *human*, in order to make the *divine* the constant rule of the human.

" He made me understand," wrote another Carmelite, " that he wanted such a total change of me into him that only the outward appearances of my personality remained, and that they would only be to him in some manner what the accidents of bread and wine are to the blessed sacrament—

[1] 1 Cor. ii 16. [2] John iii 21.

a simple veil, that is, under which, though hidden, he reveals his presence in a thousand ways."[1]

On rare occasions God has been pleased to grant exterior and tangible evidence of this transformation.

St Catherine of Siena tried one day to make her confessor, Raymund of Capua, comprehend the divine marvels that were taking place in her, and Raymund, having had no personal experience of the same extraordinary favours, was a trifle sceptical. Suddenly he looked at the saint, and there, under the features of Catherine, appeared Jesus himself. The same thing happened one day to Fr. Surin, according to M. Boudon, and, according to Fr. St Jure, to M. de Rentz.[2]

Evidently we are no longer here in the sphere of ordinary graces, but of quite uncommon gifts. It would be venturesome to deny the reality. Why, in a soul fully transformed by him, should not God work, if it pleases him, the miracle of a divine transparency ?[3]

The principal thing, therefore, is not at all the external

[1] *Marie-Aimée de Jésus* (Dorothée Quoniam), Carmelite of the Avenue du Saxe, t. i of her *Life*, pp. 316, 327. Observe the expression "en quelque sorte." Taken literally, indeed, the comparison would be inexact. After the consecration, the substance of bread disappears entirely. Our union with our Lord, if it should be carried to the point of suppression of the creature of sin in us, of the corrupt "I," leaves the substance of our personal being untouched.

[2] Beyond doubt also to Marie-Aimée de Jésus (see t. i, pp. 326-330).

[3] To those who *a priori* reject everything "marvellous" of this kind, Hello answers: "If God has poured into sanctified man his Spirit, the Spirit which works miracles, why should he refuse him the miracles themselves, if you have changed your life for the life of God, which is a kind of permanent and unfelt ecstasy, why deny him, in his turn, the right of visiting you with a kind of accidental and conscious ecstasy ?" (*Philosophie et athéisme*, p. 225). Mark the profound and, to those who understand, exact phrase, *a kind of permanent and unfelt ecstasy*, as a qualification of that so desirable and fruitful acquisition of knowledge by faith of the sublime invisible world which we carry within us.

phenomenon, but the interior fact—emphasized on exceptional occasions by an "apparition"—the fullest possible transformation into Jesus Christ.

In view of the utter renunciation demanded,[1] this intimate fundamental transformation into Christ will be accomplished in the case of but very few. The *complete* Christian life is *adequately* expressed thus: in each Christian let there be *nothing but* Jesus Christ. "Man must separate himself from *everything* that separates."[2] "There must no longer be in your hearts *a single spot* where a ring could be sealed or a chain put."[3]

At each turn we come across such advice in spiritual writers. It is good to have it continually in our mouths. It is so difficult for us to be *practically* convinced. We all want to be great saints, but we would rather achieve our desire without being obliged to give up *everything*. To burn our boats is so difficult. And yet "the Holy Spirit cannot possess you entirely without your *entire* self-destruction." So says the great Breton missionary, Fr. Vincent Huby, to a retreatant desirous of being firmly rooted in the love of God.[4]

[1] If the reader wants to know how complete a stripping precedes this radical change of a baptized person into another Jesus Christ, let him turn to Book I, ch. xiii, of St John of the Cross, in the *Ascent of Carmel*, or to the substantial and short treatise of St Alfonso Rodriguez, the humble doorkeeper of the college at Majorca, on *The Union and Transformation of the Soul in Jesus Christ*. There, and especially in ch. iii, is such a striking parallel between death and the mortified soul who does not walk as to turn anyone giddy. So ridiculous would it be to aspire to divine union without first wishing to destroy all inward obstacles to Jesus Christ.

[2] St Angela of Foligno (trans. Hello, p. 218); she added: "Weigh it, my brethren; weigh it. How must we love, how must we serve this jealous God who wishes to possess, this God who gives himself, the God who asks."

[3] P. de Ravignan. Compare the phrase of P. Varin, "I have got rid of myself, and I feel all the better for it" (*Life*, by P. Guidée, p. 147).

[4] *Retraite sur l'Amour de Dieu*, seventh day, third meditation, second point, § 3.

" If you wish to copy your Saviour's example and do my will, which includes all good," said our Lord to St Catherine of Siena, " you must renounce your will in *all* things, you must despise and disown it. The more you die to yourself, the more you take care to reject what is of *yourself*, the more will I give you of *myself* in abundance. . . ."

Here are other words, but ever the same note:

" Whatever sort of life we may lead, or clothes we may wear, each one of us must become God's saint. So far as we prefer our safety, so far as our will has fancies which are foreign to divine union, whims of yes and no, we are in a state of childhood, we make no real progress in love: for the fire has not yet burnt out the alloy; the gold is not pure; we are still seeking ourselves; God has not consumed *all* our enmity to him."[1] More briefly, Tauler said: " There, where thou art not, God is."—And a saintly person has said: " When I end, there is he. . . . *I must keep myself dead.*"[2] In his third year retreat (*Retraite de Troisième an*), seventh day, P. de la Colombière guided himself entirely by this ideal: " *To lead a dead life.*"

It is the best translation of the Apostle's *Jam non ego . . . Christus.*" No more of *myself; Jesus Christ only.*

Let us bear it in mind: *Mors et vita*, death and life. And, in fact, in practice these two realities are as close together as the two words in the quotation; nay, there is not between them even the space of the " and." Death, life; they touch each other, or, rather, they are but one. " The saint," it has been boldly asserted, " is he who no longer lives: God lives in him." There is death and also life !

Who would dare to say that he loses in the exchange ?

[1] Ruysbroeck, *Morceaux choisis.*

[2] See the " Journal of a Soul " which we have published under the name of *Jusqu'aux sommets de l'union divine : " Consummata "* (*Apost. de la Prière*, Toulouse, 1921, pp. 169, 170, 203).

BOOK V

THE REQUIREMENTS OF OUR INCORPORATION WITH CHRIST JESUS

CHAPTER I

FAITHFULNESS TO GRACE

1. PSYCHOLOGY OF THE HOLY GHOST WORKING IN THE SOUL

I. "*Sweetness*" *and* "*strength.*"
II. *Indefatigable* "*persistence*" *and ingenious* "*variety.*"
III. *The mystery of the divine* "*comings.*"

TRUE practical devotion to the Son is devotion to the Spirit of the Son; and devotion to the Spirit of the Son is devotion to being led by the Holy Ghost.

Our Lord was pre-eminently *docibilis Dei*, flexible in his docility, and careful to follow in everything the inspirations of the Spirit of the Father. And this is true as regards each one of the proceedings of Jesus. A prayer is addressed to him, his power is invoked; he lifts his eyes to heaven and acts, but under the influence of the "power of the Most High." Thus it was before each of his miracles, before the institution of the holy Eucharist, before his last instructions to the Apostles. The holy Scripture expressly points out that his coming to the desert,[1] his return from the Jordan,[2] his offering on the Cross,[3] were all under the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

Such is the *Head*, such ought to be *the members*.

[1] *Tunc Jesus ductus est in desertum a Spiritu* (Matt. iv 1). And St Mark yet more strongly: *Spiritus expulsit eum in desertum*—The Spirit drove him into the desert.
[2] *Plenus Spiritu Sancto regressus est a Jordane* (Luke iv 1).
[3] *Per Spiritum Sanctum semetipsum obtulit* (Heb. ix 2).

I

To keep clear of mortal sin is the very least of our obligations, but it does not rise above that. It is the first stage in what St Ignatius calls in his *Exercises*, *the three degrees of humility*, or, rather, of recognition of the sovereign dominion of God.

In order to leave the principal place to the life of Christ, a courageous soul will avoid all attachment to venial sin. Such a one will go further still; he will avoid resistance to the least promptings of the Holy Ghost, to the faintest invitations to ascend.

" It is easy enough to guard against heavy falls," wrote a young lieutenant in the Great War, " but what subtle shadings and hints pass unobserved ! . . . And it is thence, nevertheless, that the soul acquires its true strength."[1] He was right. Perfect devotion to the state of grace is devotion to entire *fidelity to grace*.

At the end of a sermon on " Weariness in Well-doing " at the London Oratory, Fr. Faber put this question to his hearers: " Is there any one of you who would care to die without doing for God more than he does now?"[2] The Holy Spirit calls us unceasingly. What echo do his " ineffable groanings " find in us ?

Each one of us must seek him, and to do that we must study the psychology[3] of the Holy Spirit living in the soul, contrasted with the psychology of the soul living of the Holy Spirit.

In one of her first pages, St Magdalen of Pazzi describes with singular felicity and clarity the rôle of the Holy Ghost in his intimate relationship with us.

" I saw," says the saint, " a divine Host sitting on a throne. This Host, the noblest, the most dignified of all hosts, is the

[1] *Lieut. Joseph de Boury*, 1890-1915, by J. M. Derely, p. 44.
[2] *Spiritual Conferences*, pp. 247, 266.
[3] If the expression may be allowed.

Holy Ghost, who with the agility of his kindness and his love for us is borne quickly towards every soul which is ready to receive him. Who could say what marvellous effects he produces wherever he is received? He speaks without saying anything, and his sublime silence is understood by everyone.—He is always motionless and ever in motion, and in his movable immovability he reaches everyone. —He is always in repose, yet ever active; and in his repose he performs the greatest, most dignified, most admirable works. Always in movement, without ever changing his ground, he consolidates, preserves, and at the same time destroys everything. His immense and penetrating knowledge embraces everything, comprehends everything, pervades everything; without listening, he understands the uttermost depths of the very least word that is spoken."

In the action of the Holy Ghost in our souls the constant and the variable are distinguishable; there are methods of procedure that never change and those that are frequently dissimilar.

To begin with the *constant:* and first and foremost a mixture of sweetness and strength that is always met with. Of strength: *Vox Domini in magnificentia.* One feels that he who speaks is Power itself, and that he has that indefinable irresistibility of sweetly forcing which compels ascension. I say of sweetly forcing, because it is both very strong and very sweet.

What can be gentler (almost imperceptible) than the Master's invitation to conversion when a man has not faith? It will be so fragile, so delicate, that when a little later he tries to lay his finger exactly on the starting-point, he will find himself baffled, powerless. When and how the Holy Ghost began to call him he will be quite unable to ascertain definitely.

What can be sweeter, and at the same time stronger, than this call of God when a *vocation* is concerned: " Go,

daughter of God; go, go"? Our Lord passes close to a soul, mysteriously touching it with this word of light and shade. "If you wish!" he says. "Do you wish? If you do, *sequere!* Come, follow me."

What can be sweeter, and at the same time stronger, according to those who have experienced the sweetness of this force and the force of this sweetness, than the call of the Holy Ghost to one of those mystical ascensions of which the authors speak, since, in order to describe them, they use such velvet words as "quietude," and dominating words like "ligature"?

What can be sweeter than the soul-flashes which are called the daily *inspirations* of grace? They are of the sweetest, for they place no constraint upon one's liberty. One might say that the Holy Ghost retires to a distance: if he spoke from too near, he would be taking advantage. St Augustine, while feeling his way, understands clearly that it is the Most High who speaks, but that the great divine voice is reduced to the proportions of a spent echo: "And thou didst answer me, Lord, crying as from afar off." And at the same time, what is more imperious? The watchful soul does not hesitate to say like Samuel: "The God of Israel said to me, the strong one of Israel spoke, the ruler of men."[1]

The seed is the word of God. Every call of God is like a seed, that almost invisible something that slips in between two clods of earth in a furrow, that victorious something which Atlas-like lifts up the earth, and sometimes breaks through the hardest cements, like that seed of a tree in the cemetery at Fribourg which has broken in two the slab of a grave on which the dead man had written: "I forbid anyone ever to touch my tomb."

Moreover, as in all living things, and here we are essentially concerned with Life, the *variable* intervenes in the very middle of the constant. At times force dominates; Jehovah God

[1] 2 Kings xxiii 3.

on Sinai speaks in such a voice that Moses grovels in the dust. At other times sweetness; when God wishes to speak to Elias, he first raises a violent storm, " and God was not in the lightnings and the tempest "; then a tremendous gust of wind, " and God was not in the wind "; at length a gentle air; and in the passing air was the voice of God.

Sometimes the wind is so slight that it must be called *gemitus*. True, St Paul qualifies " moaning " by " unspeakable." Alongside of sweetness strength, but what befits him much more than compelling power is the prudence that hides to intervene. In the beginnings of the human race, in the earthly Paradise, God walked noiselessly on the sand. He has kept his habits, and that the crackling of the sand may be heard at his approach we must have trained and attentive ears. Our God is a God who goes about, a God who moves, but frequently just enough to stir the air to a sweet music:

> " I hear singing within me a sublime stranger,
> Who has ever concealed his country and his name. "

Only the first line is exact. We know the name and country of the divine stranger. But we must have silence in order to catch his profound song. The fashionable and noisy hear nothing.

II

Another characteristic of the Holy Ghost is the *persistence* of his calls.

There is not one action of ours in which he does not wish to interpose a word. Jesus in the Gospel sometimes seems tired: the Holy Ghost in our lives never. There is no need for him to take breath at the well-side.

Indeed, few have any impression of his unfailing constancy. This does not depend on the Holy Ghost, but on our distracted lives.[1]

[1] Let it be clearly understood: we do not claim that the most hearkening soul can perceive the Holy Ghost *experimentally* and

And this most sweet music of the divine voice in the depths of us possesses the utmost variety of tone. Sometimes it sings joyful notes of consolation, at other times it moans minor notes of desolation.

Persistent, then, and equal to himself in his invisible action of pure faith, *intermittent* and variable in his perceptible manifestations, such appears to be the action of the Holy Ghost.

Comparing this action with that of our Lord, Fr. Faber observes: "The Holy Ghost talks more than Jesus," or, rather, to each soul, according to temperament and fidelity, he applies the words of Jesus spoken to all and for all.

"The Holy Ghost takes the initiative more. . . . He seems to be more in a hurry . . . ; it seems that, notwithstanding all his devotion to sinners, he has a still greater one to saints; that was less observable in our Lord." And he adds: "If we may use such expressions, he is more susceptible and more sensitive."

One word on this finely acute remark. Is it not, indeed, true that the working of the Holy Ghost shows itself in proportion to the reverence given him? "He loves to be consulted, and he expects it. . . . He is satisfied with little . . . rewards scrupulously, and, in short, he gives more importance to details than we do."[1]

Perceiving with this extreme sensitiveness the subtlest shades, he rejoices to know that he is understood, listened to, followed; he is grieved to see himself dishonoured or merely forgotten. For a nothing he fills us to overflowing, and for

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as he is. That is only so in the case of certain "states," which are not in question here.

We speak only of the interior movements of *pure faith*—the subjects of the Discernment of Spirits—which constitute the *normal* working of actual grace, and of those continual invitations to ascend which every alert soul cannot but feel each time it is seriously recollected.—This important remark applies to the whole of this chapter.

[1] Fr. Faber, *Œuvres posthumes*, t. i, p. 125; t. ii, p. 242.

a nothing he disappears. He is listened to, and is correspondingly grateful. He is stifled, and feels no ill-will, and awaits the moment to return. Sometimes he is paid every possible attention, and for the sheer pleasure of being sought out he obliterates himself and vanishes; suddenly, like a flash of lightning, worlds are discovered, then once again he vanishes, only to reappear, sometimes immediately, sometimes after a long interval. One could believe that these apparently changeable appearances which we call *variable* were due to caprice; instead, it is a wonder of spiritual discernment and of continuity and skill.

Here, a slow, noiseless effort, an underground work is best; there, the blazing lightning which in a moment strikes consternation; sometimes constant invitations persist till they hit the rock without dinting it, sometimes a single tap of the stick on the wall opens it easily; sometimes it is the *cave Jesum prætereuntem et non redeuntem* which is right—help goes and does not return; and sometimes it is the *ask and it shall be opened to you* which triumphs; and the Holy Ghost, twenty times vanquished, twenty times returns to the siege of the soul.

And the second is his favourite method. What should we be, each one of us, if the Holy Ghost were to go away after the first refusal? But he knows that we are uncivil, stupid, forgetful, and is not offended. He is too great to be upset by our littleness. He has an amazing patience.

Observe grace at grips with Raymond Lully. A married man, he falls violently in love with a woman. One day, when he was writing some verses to her, our Lord appeared to him on the Cross. Raymond abandons his task, but not his passion. The next day he starts indulging his fancy again. Christ again appears to him, and the wretched poet again leaves his work, but only his work. Four times the ardent verses are interrupted; his passion only increases. One day Lully comes across Ambrosia, and pursues her right

into the church. The virtuous woman only contrives to get rid of him by receiving him in her house and showing him her breast devoured by a terrible cancer. It pleased Jesus Christ in his great mercy to manifest himself a fifth time: "Raymond, follow me." This time he was conquered, and without further delay followed Christ.

When we read such a story, ought we not to say: *Cave Jesum transeuntem et in indefinitum redeuntem*—"Beware of these excesses of a love which always returns"? You must be careful not out of interest, but out of delicacy. You must never tire of being ready to obey so tireless a God.

When one thinks of it, nothing is more worthy of our grateful admiration than this inability of the Holy Ghost to be disheartened. Yet how many outrages, mortifications, and refusals does he not put up with! The gates of souls are slammed in his face, as they were in the face of Jesus when he came to Bethlehem to look for a refuge to be born in. Who can calculate the number of times that the Holy Ghost is rejected, even by the most generous? When is the Master completely the Master?

Ecce sto ad ostium et pulso—I stand at the door and knock. While at play, little Anthony of Padua one day saw a child of his own age holding out his apron as though he wanted to gather a crop. "What is your name? Where do you come from? What do you want?"—"Where do I come from? . . . From heaven in search of all the hearts of men. My name you will find written in letters of fire above the grotto in Bethlehem, in letters of blood above the Cross on Calvary, in letters of gold above the door of the Tabernacle. I am Jesus. . . . Anthony, give me thy heart." A simple story, you will say. True enough, surely, of the Holy Ghost and ourselves.

We are continually asked to give our heart. Ah! . . . if we had to do with any other than the Spirit of Love, how often should we not wear him out! His great sorrow at the extent

of our unfaithfulness will be shown by his distressing cry: *Hospes eram et non collegistis me*—"I hoped to be your guest, and you did not want me." The sorrowful phrase, the most sorrowful in history, is only true of sinners. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

What miracles the divine workman, whom the liturgy so happily calls *Spiritus Creator, the Spirit of Creation*, can work in entirely faithful souls who allow the Holy Ghost to make himself thoroughly at home with them. Sometimes during the very course of his working in us we are not really aware of the result he expects. When God works, man—and with good reason—is often perplexed. That is as it should be. "God often works, like the Gobelin tapestry weavers, from the back, and so that the working is not seen. What one does see is an extremely ugly confusion, which appears to have no value; the work finished, the cloth is turned, and behold a masterpiece."[1]

III

But, you will say, with regard to the divine manifestations of actual grace[2] in us, or the divine inspirations which entreat us by day, why talk of "comings" of the Holy Ghost in the soul? If the soul is in a state of grace, why talk of a "coming"? One who already is in residence cannot be said to come.

No doubt, strictly speaking; but as psychologically this presence of the Holy Ghost in us is frequently unobserved, the fact of our becoming aware of it is as though it truly came. In reality it is not he who comes. He is already there. It is we who come, who restore his presence

[1] Mgr. Gay, *A sa sœur*, 12 mai, 1878. *Correspondance*, t. ii, pp. 291-292.

[2] How it differs from habitual grace, we need not point out.

to ourselves. And each time the favour is so great that it may be compared to a first arrival.

The invisible sendings of the Holy Ghost cannot be too much meditated upon. "As soon as a soul makes greater progress in the love of God it acquires a new grace, and consequently a greater merit; a new sending of the Holy Spirit occurs in it. It receives with the Holy Spirit all the adorable Trinity; it is able to converse familiarly with the divine Persons, and holily partake of all the pleasures that so happy a possession is capable of affording it. And what is still more marvellous is that this gift is not given to it once, but every time that it makes new progress in the love of God and that it progresses in grace, a new mission of the Holy Ghost, a new presence of the Holy Trinity takes place in it."[1]

This presence, considered in the light of a perpetual coming, has perhaps been dealt with by no one better than by St Bernard.[2] And Bossuet, in his *Discours sur l'union de Jésus-Christ avec l'âme fidèle*, merely comments upon it. Expressing astonishment that God speaks in us without our awareness of his coming, he observes: "He never needed to enter, since he was not outside. He is not a stranger within us, and looking within me, I perceived that he was closer to my heart than my heart itself."[3]

Explaining the mystery of Pentecost, which is the great feast of Christian gatherings and of the interior of souls, the feast of the visible comings of divine grace and the silent workings of the Holy Ghost in the depths of our conscience, St Leo the Great remarks: "The Apostles

[1] Massoulié, O.P., *Traité de la véritable oraison*, ii p., ch. x and xi.

[2] *In Cantica*, Serm. 74. The saint describes very well the flux and reflux of presences perceived. He notes how the Spirit comes and goes, what dispositions one should have at such times, etc. A document of primary importance for anyone who desires to make a thorough study of the *Discernment of Spirits*.

[3] *Doctrine spirituelle*, Téqui, 1908, fourth edition, p. 168.

awaited the Holy Ghost, not that they had not already had him, but that their souls might be flooded with a new outpouring; not the first coming, but the completion."[1]

And in the same sense Origen is right when he says: "For the true Christian every day is a continual Pentecost."[2]

"Go with your lamp lighted and full of oil, and your heart more concerned with *the Bridegroom who always comes* than anything else," wrote Mgr. Gay to his sister. And to Fr. Perdrau: "He who came, comes always; and this is the secret of the saints' progress in virtue."[3]

The great mystics complete these explanations, as Ruysbroeck, following Tauler, observes: "Such is the mystery of divine swiftness that the Bridegroom continually arrives and continually stays. He always comes for the first time as though he had never come. For his arrival, independent of time, consists in an eternal now, and an eternal desire eternally renews the joy of arrival."[4]

[1] *Second sermon for the feast of Pentecost : Sperabatur autem quia illum Dominus Jesus spoponderet adfuturum, non ut tunc primum esse sanctorum habitator inciperet, sed ut sacrata sibi pectora et ferventius accenderet, et copiosius inundaret : cumulans sua dona, non inchoans.*

[2] *Contra Celsum*, p. 9, t. viii, col. 846.

[3] *Correspondance*, t. ii, pp. 133 and 307.

[4] *Œuvres choisies*, trans. Hello, t. i, p. 73. Tauler speaks in the same sense. See explanation of Fr. Bernadot, *La vie Spirituelle*, December, 1919, "Apropos du mystère de Noël."

Chapter II

FAITHFULNESS TO GRACE (*Continued*)

2. The Psychology of the Soul under the Action of the Holy Ghost

I. *Dispositions "before" acting.*
II. *Dispositions "during."*
III. *Faithfulness the true sign and goal of "love."*

I

SISTER ELIZABETH of the Trinity, in her beautiful and well-known prayer, uses these words: "I want to pass my life hearkening to thee. I want to become altogether *teachable*, so that I may learn everything from thee."

The first essential disposition for profiting by the passings of God, the comings of God, or, rather, if one is in a state of grace, by his continual indwelling, is indeed this: to be on the look out, to wish to hear, to seek to perceive the teachings of the interior Master.

How many listen ?

St Gertrude bemoaned the "thick skin of her neglect,"[1] which set up a partition between her and God. Each moment a voice says to us, "If you will"; but not to have to will we stifle the voice in the din, not always quite knowingly, but with that secret, subtle, half-bad faith, which is so deadly.

"If you are conscious of self, stop; if you are conscious of God, give yourself up," advised Tauler.

To be yearning for the least light, and to walk always with all the light you have, such is the rule that makes saints. God does not say the same to everybody. Be recollected enough to hear all that is said to you; and this *before* acting.

[1] *Insinuations*, Liv. II, ch. viii. This Book II is the only one which is certainly and exclusively hers.

So we will place ourselves for the moment where we must act, in the best conditions for doing everything. And that is rare. Still rarer than listening to everything.

How many resemble those people in the times of the Crusades who refused to embark for the Holy Land, the land of noble duties. They rest on soft beds, behind them an open window, and in the distance the sea which carries the laden galleys of those who have consented to depart.

" . . . I say that all who are fortunate have that open window behind them, and that all of them feel by the cold which blows across their souls the appeal from that open window."

A vague instinct stops me. . . . I would gladly accept the bold invitation which " the ship of large-hearted duty " sends me from the horizon by its widespread sail, but whither will it lead me ? " Let us lie on our soft cushions."

Miserable faint-heartedness ! Is God, then, so cruel as to set a gin beneath our enthusiasm ? " No, but he seems to ask me to embark at night. If only I knew where he wants to lead me !"

" At least you know that God is infinitely good; that he wishes you all good and no evil. What more do you want ? Has a child, then, no confidence in his Father even in the dark ? . . . And is it not true that the darker it gets the more he gives himself up to the hand that guides him ?"— " To wish what God wishes is to be strong; to wish only what God wishes is to be free; to be free and strong is to be capable of everything."[1]

Let us have this spirit of liberty and full abandonment. Away with apprehensions, which are useless and insulting to the Master. " The past and the future are but forms of self."[2] Let us despise this absurd love of ourselves, and be ready beforehand—without further details—to throw overboard all unnecessary ballast in order to reach the regions where God wants us.

[1] Mgr. Gay. [2] Fr. Faber.

II

Try to see clearly what the Lord demands, and do not level down his generosity beforehand to the narrow pusillanimous limits of an eagerly discounted service: that is but a mere beginning. God watches us at work to see if we have truly a great soul and a willing heart, *corde magno et animo volenti*.[1]

One Palm Sunday St Gertrude ardently desired to offer to Jesus the hospitality he received that day at Bethania. "Here am I," presently said the divine guest of her heart, "and what wilt thou give me?"—"My sole salvation," she replied. "I have in me nothing suitable to your divine magnificence, but I offer you entirely all that I am. Make ready in me all that you deem to be capable of pleasing you."—"Then give me the key of thy heart."—"What is that key?" asked Gertrude.

"It is," replied Jesus, "thy will."[2]

"All that is necessary is a good 'I will' to make us entirely God's," wrote St Margaret Mary to one of her Ursuline friends. "I wish you a faithful correspondence to grace, following the light that God gives you."[3]

"Happy is he who never hesitates, whose only fear is not to follow promptly enough, who always prefers to do rather

[1] 2 Mach. i 3.

[2] *Insinuations*, t. xiv, ch. xxiii, ed. Lecoffre, pp. 110, 111.

[3] *Life of the Saint*, Paray, 1876, t. ii, Letters cxxi and cxxiii, pp. 305-309. And as an additional stimulus to the zeal of her correspondent she adds:

"I think that our Lord is not at all content with your behaviour, and I fear that he may tire of your resistance, and that, after having tried in vain to win your heart, knocking unceasingly at the door and being unable to enter, he may retire and leave it to its enemies, for he has no wish to share a heart! He wants to have all or leave all. . . . What if at the hour of death it were said, 'Take off that habit, which has covered but a shadow of religion'" (*ibid.*, pp. 304, 308). Compare her advice to Sister le Barge urging to a fervent life.

too much than too little against himself. Happy he who boldly shows the whole piece as soon as he is asked for a sample, and leaves God to cut from it. Happy he who, counting himself as nothing, never puts God in the necessity of specially troubling about him."[1]

In superbly winged words Fr. Gratry comments on our Lord's *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, qui occidis prophetas*—"Jerusalem, who killest the prophets."

Jerusalem is the soul! . . . the prophets, the messengers of God, are the impulses that God unceasingly sends to the soul.

"The whole question is this: What shall I do with these impulses from God? What shall I do with the beginnings and the germinations which are always working in me, which follow each other like waves, or rather like a sustained voice? Will the voice cry in the desert? Shall I reject the voice, stifle the inspiration, trample the beginnings under foot, pervert and turn aside the first enthusiasms? Am I, in short, going to stone the prophets and kill the

[1] Fénelon, *Avis spirituel*, No. xxii, *La parole intérieure*, *Œuvres*, t. i, ed. Vivès, 1854, p. 611. He adds with great acumen:

"When we resist we find pretexts for covering up and justifying resistance, but however much we try to deceive ourselves, we are not happy; there is ever at the bottom of our conscience an indefinable something that rebukes us for having failed towards God. The soul is no longer at peace, but it does not seek true peace; on the contrary, it gets farther and farther away from it by looking for it where it is not. It is like a bone which is out of joint, always causing a hidden pain; but however much it may hurt out of place, it is not in the way to get straight again; on the contrary, it gets fixed in its crooked condition.

"Oh, how much is a soul to be pitied when it begins to reject the secret invitations of God, which ask it to die to everything. At first only an atom, but this atom becomes a mountain, and soon develops into a kind of impenetrable chaos between God and itself. When God asks something, it turns a deaf ear, it is frightened of hearing him; one would like to be able to say to oneself that one has not heard him, and, indeed, we do say so, but without convincing ourselves. How many souls, after great sacrifices, fall into such resistances."

messengers of God? Yes, such is the way of souls. The soul is a free being who stones the prophets and kills the messengers of God. A soul who knew how to listen, follow, obey, carry out, and develop, within reason and liberty, what is inspired and begun by God, would be too lovely and too divine. What then? Is this habit of murdering and strangling the gifts of life going to repel God and conquer his endeavours? No, for while the forces, and desires, and flights, and thoughts, and acts of the soul unceasingly remove it from God and dissipate it in egoism and sensuality, and the surface inhabited by the soul becomes more and more unproductive; while the soul adorns herself outwardly and neglects herself inwardly; while she builds and whitens the sepulchre beneath which death is at work, even at that very time God, full of love, by some fresh exertion, some mighty cry, some lightning flash, is ever calling back to himself the soul and its forces. *How often would I have gathered together thy children as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings.*"[1]

As a matter of fact, is not the history of our life often to be summed up in the history of perpetual infidelities? God has the most splendid schemes for us. We oblige him constantly to modify them. He has to suspend such grace as he was ready to give us because we have failed or neglected to deserve it. And touch is added to touch. . . . What remains of the original plan?

" God saw beforehand from eternity, in himself, the life he desires us to live in time. His idea of us, his eternal will regarding us, makes up our ideal history, the great potential poem of our life. Our Father, full of love, unceasingly inspires our conscience with this beautiful poem. . . . Each imperceptible vibration is a gift, a talent I ought to receive, an impulse which I should follow, a beginning I should carry out, which I ought to make good. And thou, O Father,

[1] Gratry, *Commentaire sur l'évangile de St Matthieu*, t. ii, pp. 205, 207.

knowest the resistance, the misunderstandings, the perversions. At each resistance or misunderstanding thine idea provides another poem, a lesser poem, but glorious yet, in place of all those whose inspiration I have fallen short of."[1]

Is it wide of the mark to say that souls do not achieve sanctity because one day, at a given moment, they did not fully respond to a divine overture? Our future does at times depend upon two or three "Yeas" or "Nays," which ought to have been and were not spoken, involving numberless acts of generosity or failures.

Who knows to what heights we could attain if we were resolved to keep step with divine generosity? But our cowardice only allows us to walk like dwarfs.

Who knows to what mediocrity, or even worse, we commit ourselves through having failed to respond to calls from on high? We have noticed the strange words of our Lord to St Margaret Mary on the danger of not being faithful, and we may add these: "Take care never to allow this lamp (your heart) to go out, for if ever it does go out you will never more have light wherewith to rekindle it."

No false fears, then, but no false presumptions. You cannot play with the grace of God. It goes, and if indeed it does sometimes return, it does not always. If it returns, and is the same as on its first visit, it finds a heart already enfeebled by cowardice and less fortified to correspond. And God is not so pledged to bestow another grace on us. After all, why should he be, with such a precedent? How disturbing a testimony at God's judgement-seat will be this neglected grace, this disregarded inspiration, this unspeakable recklessness in running up debts!

The saints trembled at the thought of the harm done by unfaithfulness to divine advances.

"I have seen," writes St Teresa, "highly educated people fall into the snares of the enemy. All hell is in

[1] Gratry, *Commentaire sur l'évangile de St Matthieu*, t. ii, p. 251. See also *Les sources*, second part, p. 278.

league against them; the devils know that these souls are not lost by *themselves*, but that a great number of others follow them. How often is a single soul enough to convert a multitude ?

" Our Lord is as ready now as then to grant graces. What do I say ? . . . Nay, more ready; for the number of people who live but for his glory is so limited to-day. But, alas ! we are too fond of ourselves; we are so excessively cautious about not losing one of our rights; oh, what a profound mistake !

" A soul which presumes to be the bride of God, and to whom God by so great favours has already communicated himself, would be, unless guilty of infidelity, unable to yield itself to sleep."[1]

Angela of Foligno speaks in no less sorrowfully trembling terms:

" One day I was at prayer. . . . I heard: . . . Those who are illuminated by the Lord find their own way by interior and spiritual light. But some of them close their ears through fear of hearing and their eyes through fear of seeing. Not wanting to hear the word of him who speaks in the soul, although they feel the divine Saviour thus comes to them, in spite of the intimate voice, they turn away and follow along the common track. These are accursed of Almighty God.

" I heard these words, not once, but a thousand times. Gripped by a violent temptation, I took this teaching for an illusion. How is this ? said I. Here is a soul illumined by God, who overwhelms it with his gifts, and curses it because it follows the ordinary route. This utterance seemed too terrible; I refused with horror to even listen to the voice which spoke.

" Then, in compliance with my weakness, a homely example was given me. A father wishes to make a scholar of his son. He spares no expense, chooses the best

[1] St Teresa, *The Interior Castle*, Fifth Mansion, ch. iv.

teaching. . . . Note the result: his education finished, the ungrateful and stupid son takes a job in a common workman's shop.

"The son is the soul who, first of all enlightened by preaching and the Scripture, is given admission to the sanctuary, where the word of God is all around him; in the spiritual light he learns how he ought to follow the way of Christ. He is touched interiorly. God, who at first left him to the tender mercies of men and books, interposes directly, and shows him the light which only he can show. He gives him privileged knowledge, so that he who has so splendidly seen his own way may be a beacon to others. But if this well-beloved neglects the gift of God, if he becomes stupid and dull, if he rejects the light and knowledge and inspiration of God, God takes the light away from him and curses him.

"I received orders to write these words and show them to my father confessor, because they affect him personally."[1]

Did we sometimes consider these warnings of the saints, we would perhaps be less cowardly. One act of unfaithfulness to grace seems of such small importance to us.

It is related of Alfonso Rodriguez, the holy porter of the college in Majorca and friend of Peter Claver the apostle of the negroes, that he never went along a certain corridor of the house without going down on his knees and praying our Lord's pardon for a fault which he thought he had committed one day in that place.

Let us profit by these significant examples. We must not coerce God into correcting his work, and must live our spiritual life just as he conceived it. We must never resist "this strong persecution of grace." The faults of sinners are disobediences to the commandments; the sins of the good, lack of docility to the Holy Ghost.

[1] *Le livre des Visions et Révélations*, trans. Hello, fifth edition, p. 194.

" We only respond to a score of the graces that come to us in hundreds," sadly observed Cardinal Manning in his journal, " or rather we only take stock of a score and respond to but one."

Henceforth let our devotion to the state of grace be in us devotion to *absolute faithfulness thereto.*

III

A soul who at each moment consents to what God wishes possesses perfect love.

And it matters little that this will of God regarding our life concerns a humble or a striking action. The point is not the action in itself, but the fact that God wishes it at a given moment.

And here a gentle hint is necessary for some souls who attribute holiness where none is, and picture to themselves all sorts of highly coloured and brilliant heroisms, quite a different thing to the drab prose of our daily round, to the precise observance of the least duties, to stern resistance to our self-love, and faithfulness in repelling the temptations of the street, the home, the workshop, the drawing-room, or the office.

They are flattered and tranquillized by imagining something very high and distant. True holiness is not lost in the mists. It is something less glittering and more difficult, at once within our reach and humbly mortifying.

If, in the lyric manner, we borrow from the literature of chivalry or have recourse to a fine clash of arms, waving of banners, shouts of bloody combats, assaults, and wholesale slaughter, that is easily explicable. Nothing is worthier of true poetry than true drama, and true drama is to be seen in each of us before temptation or perfection.

For all that we must not be mistaken. The daily drama of our lives for God is written in prose, and in paltry, insignificant prose, without much relief, or sonorous rhymes, or fine rhythm . . . except that provided by

each beat of the love of the poor thirsty heart, which would fain do better and finds itself reduced to almost nothing.

The intelligent ardent soul easily reconciles what at first seems irreconcilable: a high idea of holiness and a life full of humble details; and understands that these humble details are the only materials which it has wherewith to build up holiness. The true ideal touches the real truth, if, indeed, it is not synonymous therewith. Both spirituality and art bear witness to this.

And should God call us to a more visible heroism, this previously hidden valour will be the most reliable guarantee of a faithfulness, if not more costly, at least more brilliant. The circumstance sometimes makes the thief, but far more does the thief make the circumstance. To keep a school of cowardice does not tend to make one brave. The great generous acts of a unique moment are nearly always preceded by an apprenticeship in small generosities at every moment.

We aspire high. Of the little that comes our way we must let nothing go, and on the narrow ribbon of life which unrolls itself before us like a telegraphic tape we must put the thin mark, constantly repeated, of complete self-surrender.

And we must be careful not to consider this a little thing. "Faithfulness at all times, in all places, in all occupations; faithfulness day and night; interior, exterior faithfulness; faithfulness every hour, every minute, every second, and in spite of everything. This means a great deal. O faithfulness, which perfects every action in proportion as the practice of it is attempted, thou art love itself, containing all heroism, all attention, all delicacy; most pure and strong, thou leadest straight to the imitation of Jesus, of whom the Gospel says 'he accomplished all things well.'"[1]

[1] Sœur Marie-Aimée de Jésus, t. i, pp. 281-282. See note as to her rule for making sure of this fidelity, and this little word which says so much: "Prayer before everything, above everything, in spite of everything."

To this word *faithfulness* everyone, be it understood, does not attribute the same fulness of meaning. The soul accustomed to allow full play to the Holy Ghost will think of giving overflowing measure.

We shall often have a choice of two courses of action: both good, but our instinct tells us that one perhaps is more agreeable to God. Instinct, supernatural instinct, instinct laboriously acquired, but the exercise of which love makes spontaneous, verges towards whatever gives God greater glory. In practice that will often be equivalent to choosing the most mortifying action. The logic of faithfulness takes us to the point of going beyond faithfulness only, and of aiming at *the most perfect.*

" When I see the best," remarked a young pupil, " the good is not enough." God had revealed a great secret to him.

Some will undertake to bind themselves by vow to what is most pleasing to God. Caprice is the great enemy of holiness. This caprice we will imprison in the meshes of a net, the thread of which is woven by will and the holes closed up by love.

We must not attempt a *vow* of perfection indiscreetly or without control, without prudent weighing and a long experience of our energies and the calls of God.[1] But that every soul anxious to be unrestrictedly generous can aspire to the most perfect *practice* is merely what it will come to find out for itself by the logic of love.

[1] *The Ideal of Reparation* Cf. all spiritual writers.

BOOK VI

THE EUCHARIST: THE MOST ELOQUENT REMINDER AND THE MOST EFFICIENT AGENT OF OUR INCORPORATION WITH CHRIST JESUS

CHAPTER I

OFFERING JESUS CHRIST TO GOD

I. *The essential act of Christian worship is the offering of Jesus Christ to God.*

II. *The moment at which this worship reaches its maximum expression is the Mass.*

III. *Pray thus, even outside of the Mass.*

AT the cost of a generous, unreserved sacrifice to lend our spirit, our heart, our body to our Lord, sacrificing everything that is not him; to become a " Jesus " for the Father, or, better, to become " Jesus " for him, not a Jesus differing from the great and only Jesus, but a being where Christ is so much everything that we are no longer anything, *Jam non ego, Christus*—such is the ideal end of our perfect transformation into Jesus Christ through entire mortification and absolute purity of life.

Baptism, as we have said, marks the starting-point of this calling to the utter death of self in exchange for a life which is solely and wholly " in Christ."

And not only has he made a *demand* on our soul in this respect, but he has already *brought about* a *fundamental* separation from corruption.

But if at the roots of our Christian being we are purified, vivified, and separated from the germs of death, the fact

remains that from the beginning we contained these germs, and they will always have the power of regaining strength by contact with the poisonous miasma of the vicious atmosphere surrounding us.

How many of those who are baptized live free from serious sin? How many live without consenting to venial sin? How many are detached, and living here on earth as though not living?

We are *conformed to God* in principle, but how little in fact and in practice!

Our transformation in Jesus Christ is to be taken up again each day. We must aim at being him under our own likeness. Under the appearance of "ourselves" have we not remained altogether ourselves, and become so far very little him? In the deep realities of our moral being, who will best help to work the changes, the modifications, the substitution? One must even go so far as to say, who will transubstantiate (if one may use the Eucharistic term suggested by the expressions "species or appearances," a term not to be taken in the sense exclusively reserved to the Mass, but which with the desired reservation well renders the thought of the Apostle)—who will transubstantiate our poor being of mud and sometimes of sin into this sublime reality, a member of Jesus Christ, if not exactly the sacrament of transubstantiation *par excellence, the Eucharist?*[1]

At the altar the change takes place in a moment. The priest pronounces the words; the bread is no longer bread.

[1] On this head the observation of Fr. Joseph Huby on St John in particular applies to the doctrine of the incorporation in general (*Etudes*, Nov. 5, 1921, p. 281). "This doctrine does not at all eliminate the *exterior* and sensible element that a religion made for man composed of body and soul necessarily requires: rites, sacraments, visible authority. St John is a great spiritualist ('God is a spirit, and they who adore him must adore him in spirit and in truth'), but also a great sacramentalist ('Unless you eat,' etc.). . . . Nobody has more strongly set forth the universal necessity of the sacramental life for the birth and growth in us of 'the seed of the Father.'"

Jesus Christ dwells there; henceforth, whole and entire. In practical life our adequate conversion into a member of Christ takes place during a long period, slowly, alas! very slowly.

But nothing better reminds us of the obligation of striving to attain to this sublime substitution—perhaps we should say nothing helps us so much to make it real in our poor human lives—as the sacrament which, at the pleasure of divine omnipotence, put into action by the will of the consecrator, substitutes for dead and fragile species the very being of Christ.

I

Only one thing in the world matters: that God be glorified.

Who can glorify God as he deserves? *Jesus only.*

Equal to the Father, he humbled himself to the level of our humanity. Thereupon he can recognize "a greater" in the Father; he can bow before this "greater" and render to him a true worship of humility, submission, and obedience.

Further, he alone can offer to the Father a homage worthy of the Most High. As the Word, he is equal to the Father, and shares with him his title of infinite. The sacred humanity united to the Word in the unity of a single Person can offer a homage of infinite value to the Father.

Christ therefore has at his disposal *all* the worship, and the *only* worship worthy of God.

Our own worship henceforth will not be truly *Christian,* or, rather, will *only* be Christian, in the offering to the Father of him who can obtain what the Father looks for, and all that he looks for—in the offering of Christ Jesus to the Father.

The only person in the universe who fully practises the virtue of religion—to use M. Olier's expression, the only true "religious"—is Christ.

There is no religion outside of him, there is no religion but in him. The entire Christian cult may be summed up in these two propositions:

To offer Jesus Christ unceasingly to the Father; to offer ourselves in complete submission and sacrifice of self, so as to be one only with Jesus Christ.

Hence it is plain that Christian worship is in a high degree a sacerdotal procedure, in a moral attitude of a twofold and continual offering: the offering of Christ to God, not alone of the historic Christ Jesus born of the blessed Virgin, but of Christ in his fulness, *Plenarium corpus Christi*,[1] which includes the Head and all its members, the Saviour and all of us, who, with him, are but one.

In short, for those who thoroughly understand them, these three words are equivalent: religion, worship, priesthood.

This last word has acquired a special meaning in our language of to-day; but it is only fair to observe that alongside of the *official* priesthood of the priest, called with Jesus and after him to consecrate the bread and wine, standing out by his unrivalled dignity and sovereign power from the rest of the faithful, there is the *mystical* priesthood of *all* Christians, priesthood, doubtless, of another grade, as we have just noted, but none the less *royal;* the word is St Peter's, as is also that of priesthood applied to the faithful, and consisting in the "offering to God of spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."[2]

Our life should be a continual *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, an endless praise of God, not necessarily of lip, but of action. We are essentially beings created to praise God for his glory; man is put on earth by God, *ut laudet*, said St Ignatius, agreeing with all catechisms, giving its greatest extension to the word "praise," including in it the idea of *service*, of service entirely dependent, entirely yielded to him who alone is Master.

But with our feeble voice and dwarfish action, how are we to give to God *in excelsis* a glory rising above nothingness ?

[1] St Augustine on Ps. cx.

[2] 1 Pet. ii 5.

In this wise: Christ will become one of us; he will make of us " something of himself."

How can a homage worthy of God ever reach him from earth ?

God himself will come on earth. " You needed an offering worthy of God: there it is." The Incarnation is Jesus given to us, not that we may keep him as our own property, but that by way of filial offering we may give him back to the Father. Jesus is lent to us so that we, wretched, poverty-stricken creatures, may offer an infinite homage to God.

By a sort of sublime craft, God with one hand holds out the treasure to us, leaving it for a moment in our arms; then with the other hand he draws it back; in this cycle of the offering he finds a glory corresponding to his grandeur.

II

In virtue of the Incarnation, then, there has fallen to our lot the possibility of offering to God, God himself in the person of Jesus, made one of us.

The memory of this annihilation frequently escapes us. The Saviour has invented a way—*the* way pre-eminently—of reminding us by repeating at the altar in each Mass the coming of his Person in our midst in a renewed act of humiliation. The thought of offering him to the Father would escape us; he has willed that at each Mass, under our eyes, the offering of his sacrifice be made over again.

Many have, if not a false, at least an inadequate idea of the Eucharist, and some forget what is essential and primary in the intention of God and Christ.

Our Lord did not come on earth, he is not present on the altar at every Mass, he does not dwell all the time in the tabernacle, solely or chiefly to give himself *to us*, but to offer himself *to the Father*, or, rather, so that we may give him to the Father, to whom he offers himself.

In other words, the Incarnation[1] and the Eucharist have not as their final end the honour of the Son Incarnate or the happiness of man, but the honour of the Father, the glory of God in the highest. When Christ comes, he does not come solely for himself or for us. He comes, in fine, so that the Infinite Majesty, whose High Priest he was made by this strange proceeding, may be glorified.

To put it yet another way. The dominant Person in Eucharistic worship, above Jesus, Word made flesh, Word made bread, is the Father, or, rather, the Holy Trinity. To restrict our devotion to the Host, to the adoration of our Lord, and not to extend it to the offering to the Father, to the Holy Trinity of our Lord, is not to understand all the Eucharist, is not wholly to understand our Lord, is not to understand the whole reason of his coming.

It is clear that of all moments, the one which should fire the Christian with the spirit of oblation is that of the holy Sacrifice.

At the Mass the " principal person " is God, is the Holy Trinity. Jesus himself plays his part of mediator, of someone in the service of a " Greater One," offering himself to this Greater One to glorify him infinitely. Above the altar where the priest celebrates artists have represented the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; this is to interpret truly the mind of the Church, whose eye, looking beyond the picture, ascends to him to whom it is offered.

Receive, O Holy Trinity . . .
O God, who . . ., etc.
Receive, Holy Father . . .
O most merciful Father, etc. . . .

Such are the opening words of the principal prayers.

In the beginning, so much was this idea taken for granted, that the elevation was not even thought of. Until the eleventh

[1] Whatever attitude one takes towards the original cause of the Incarnation, there is no doubt that *post factum*, the Incarnation having taken place, our Lord is not there only *for us*, but also and principally *for the glory of his Father*.

century that rite was not included in the Mass, even where it seems right that our Lord should be the end and aim of our adorations. As the heretic Berengarius had cast doubt on the real presence, the Church, in order to emphasize this real presence, ordained that the Host and chalice should be shown to everyone immediately after the consecration, so that all could adore the Body and Blood of Christ.

And in this very movement of the priest, in this movement of the hands which are stretched and lifted, since the principal intention of the Church when instituting the elevation is to show Jesus to the faithful, how can we any longer fail to see, at the same time as the presentation to the faithful, the offering to the Most High ?

At High Mass the custom has prevailed for those in the choir to remain standing after the consecration; indeed, that is the attitude of him who makes an offering. The priest stands upright, like Mary at the foot of the Cross. The priest is in an erect attitude at the very moment of offering the victim to God.

We do not wish to over-emphasize this symbolism, but it has its uses. However, it is not the external attitude that matters, though it is at times a help; it is the attitude of the soul which has to be noted.

St Gertrude relates that in one of her revelations she saw the Lord Jesus, true Priest and Pontiff, stand upright on his throne in heaven and, lifting up his Sacred Heart in his own hands, present it to God his Father as a sacrifice of himself. And Gertrude adds: " At the moment when the Son of God offered his divine heart to God the Father, the bell rang at the elevation of the Host in church." This revelation made to the saint expresses perfectly the mystery of the sacrifice renewed by the Saviour himself in the hands of the celebrant.[1]

[1] We leave alone the question of determining whether the *essence* of the sacrifice of the Mass is *only* in this *offering.*

How many souls suffer from never being able to offer God a homage worthy of himself! Enthusiastic and generous, they tax their ingenuity and try hard. But with their paltry personal merits—and they think these are all they have to offer—can they make a gift that is worth anything? Of their lives, of the squalid details of their squalid lives, how can they make an offering to satisfy God, and that as fully as possible? As well expect to fill an infinite abyss with drops of nothing. And this strange consciousness of their limitations tortures them, and they run the risk of getting depressed.

Besides, is not our cowardice ever striving to cut down the best of our gifts? We give up so little, above all we seek a good bargain. Even when we give up all, our all hardly amounts to anything. And because we so hypnotize ourselves regarding the glory we obtain for God by *our merits alone* we get no further, or, if we do, it is without expansion or enlargement of soul, and not without inward anxiety.

Why not avoid the question and try to lose sight of one's self for a moment? I thirst to obtain the glory of the Father. I wish only for that; it is my most cherished ambition. How with so much " I " shall I attain it? But have I not Jesus? Why not busy myself before all else with offering Jesus to the Father?

We would then be far away from the recitation of heaven knows what prayers during Mass, chosen anyhow, chosen in any case in a different spirit from that of which we are speaking; or even of reciting the prayers of the Mass themselves *without* the spirit which makes them full of meaning.

III

Even outside of our attendance at the holy Sacrifice, since we worship there above all the *Presence*, as in the visit to the blessed Sacrament, we must never forget the *Oblation*. The habit of offering Jesus to the Father should become the great Christian habit, since it is pre-eminently the practice of " religion."

Every moment of the day the Son offers himself to the Father for the redemption of the world. We reckon 350,000 Masses in twenty-four hours, or four elevations per second. *Each time that my heart beats*, and even oftener, I can say to myself: *Jesus is offering himself.*

It happens that I fall into some sin. . . . I offer the Precious Blood in reparation.

Is a grace granted to me? I offer the divine Host as the only thanks worthy of God.

I am suffering pain. At this very moment the holy Victim is being offered up on several altars. Why not unite my sacrifice to his?

Am I not in need at every moment of praying for the Church, for the great interests of God in souls, for sinners, for missions, for priests? I join myself to the divine impetration of the Saviour from whom comes all grace.

When Mass is finished, our Lord from the depths of his tabernacle unceasingly offers himself to his Father, and yields him infinite praises throughout the nights and days, a marvellous worship of thanks above all expression and an adoration without limit.

Why are we not more accustomed to lay hold of " this uninterrupted and sublime thanksgiving "? Eucharist means " thanksgiving." Devotion to the Eucharist necessarily includes the longing to offer to God through Jesus Christ in the blessed Sacrament an infinite " thanksgiving."

Fr. Chaumonot, an heroic seventeenth-century missionary

in Canada, wrote: " More than forty-six years ago, touched by the words of our Lord, *Ego honorifico Patrem meum*, I resolved that henceforth I would never love the sweet Jesus for any other reason than that of having infinitely loved and honoured his divine Father. It is impossible for me to tell you how my soul has profited by this devotion."[1]

Beyond all manner of doubt, we should profit in the same way.

St Margaret Mary once described her prayer thus: " I generally finish without any other request or offering than that of my Jesus to his eternal Father in this manner: My God, I offer your well-beloved Son in thanksgiving for all the benefits you have conferred upon me, for my request, my offering, my adoration, all my resolutions, and finally I offer him for my love and my all. Receive him, eternal Father, for all that you wish of me, since I can offer you nothing worthy of you except him whom you give me to enjoy with so much love."[2]

Among several others we cannot help remembering the

[1] His way of understanding the Mass will very well illustrate what we remarked above:

" At the altar, when I offer the Host, I experience a great joy at having in my Jesus, whom I am going to sacrifice, an immense storehouse of satisfactions for the expiation of all my sins and of giving to my God by this sacrifice more glory than I, a sinner, and all other sinners could ever have taken away from him.

" I rejoice at being able to offer to my Creator the adoration and homage of his own Son, to make good the obligations of acknowledgement and worship that all men cannot, will not, or know not how to render to him.

" I can conceive of no greater honour for a created being than that of being able to yield to his Creator all the homage, all the thanks, and all the satisfactions that are worthy of him. And yet we render all that to him when we offer his dear Son on our altars."—*Life*, by Fr. Martin, Oudin, 1855, pp. 247, 260.

[2] *Vie et œuvres par les Contemporaines*, ed. de Paray, t. i, p. 90. See also pp. 95 and 97, t. ii, Letter cxx to Sister le Barge: " Don't worry in the least over the trouble you feel about a drooping life . . . join yourself as much as you possibly can to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ our Lord, at first to acquire the

words in which the venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation, of the Ursulines of Quebec, summed up her great and strong devotion to Christ " the Mediator of religion ":

" It is through the Heart of my Jesus that I approach you, eternal Father. Through this divine Heart I adore you for all those who do not adore you; I love you for all those who do not love you; I acknowledge you for all those blind and obstinate ones who, whether through contempt or indifference, do not acknowledge you; I wish through this divine Heart to pay the debt of all mankind. Going round the world in spirit, I seek all the souls redeemed by the precious blood of my Saviour, so as to give satisfaction for all by the merits of his adorable Heart."[1]

What a distance between such words and the wretched, narrow, egoistical prayer of so many Christians!

We will say nothing of exceptional devotion, of extra-normal piety, which would not be for the ordinary person. The flower of Catholic piety is what we are concerned with. When the Church prays, she prays thus; it is always Jesus Christ that she offers, and whatever else she offers is always in Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ: *Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum.* Let us try to pray with the Church and as the Church prays.

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necessary dispositions, and finally for atonement. Can you, for instance, achieve nothing at prayer? Be content with offering that which your divine Saviour does for us in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar, offering all his ardours in reparation for your lukewarmness."

[1] *Life*, by a Religious of the same Order, p. 183.

Chapter II

OFFERING OURSELVES TO GOD WITH JESUS CHRIST

I. *To offer Jesus Christ to the Father is to be "included in" the sacrifice. Jesus Christ means our Lord "and" ourselves.*

II. *The most appropriate moment for this offering of ourselves with Jesus Christ is "at Mass."*

III. *The "priest" is the person on whom the obligation is strongest to offer himself with Jesus Christ: after him "everyone who attends" Mass. "Take part" in the Sacrifice.*

I

BUT it will be said: Is not this offering to God of our Lord simply a convenient cloak for laziness; is it not merely a delicate way of getting round the offering of one's self? I have nothing. I give in. Not only so, but I take no steps to acquire merits. Our Lord has an infinite stock of them. I offer his. It is easier and costs less. And since God only finds his glory in the merits of Christ, what need of self-abnegation, renouncement, and labour? I live as I fancy, in sin, and why shouldn't I? At a given moment there is always Jesus Christ for me to offer to God, and he will come to the rescue and more than make up for my deficiencies. Since he is all that matters, I should be silly to bother. And see how the whole of the Christian life is boiled down to the purely platonic offering to God of one who is not ourselves.

Let us leave this doctrine to the followers of Luther.

To offer Jesus to God is not at all to offer someone entirely not ourselves. Have we forgotten that the entire Christ embraces not only Jesus, the son of Mary, but every one of us, called as a Christian to compose his mystical body?

The head alone is not all Jesus. *The head and the members*—these are the complete body.

Then it is the complete Jesus who offers himself to God. To be outside of the oblation is to mutilate Jesus Christ, according to the vigorous expression of Bossuet: " ' We beg thee, O God,' we say each day at the *Supplices*, ' to order that *these things* be carried to thine altar on high,' " etc. These things, observes the great bishop, are in truth the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ; but they are this body and blood along with all of us, and all that together makes up one only offering.

I am " part of Jesus Christ "—that explains how I can offer Jesus to the Father, and why I must offer myself to the Father with Jesus.

Whence comes it, indeed, that I am *allowed*—I, a poor wretched nothing—to take Jesus Christ and use him in homage to the most high God? Whence comes it that this action of mine is not a sacrilege? In that I am but one with the *Offerer*.

Whence comes it that I am *ordered*, in offering Jesus Christ, not to separate my oblation from his? In that the *Offering* is the whole Christ, and that in the whole Christ I am included.

The holocaust of the Saviour embraces Jesus Christ in his entirety—that is to say, he and the crowd of the just of all times closely bound to its Head, partaking of his sufferings, and thus offering a continual sacrifice.

The immolation of the Saviour—so he himself wished it—is not enough. Our own must be joined to it. *Crux Christi sine tua non sufficit*. Our Lord has acquired infinite merits, but for his merits to reach souls the co-operation of our merits is necessary. Jesus has effected the principal part of the task; not all of it. It behoves each one of us to complete it. *Remansit quidem quia non omnia nostra Christus explevit. . . . Hoc profecto residuum viderat qui dicebat : si compatimur et conregnabimus, quasi dicat : quod explevit Christus non valet, nisi ei qui et quod remansit adimplet.*[1]

[1] *St Gregory the Great*, in lib. i Reg. liv, iv.

The work of the Saviour is sufficient only for him who completes it on his own account.

Our Lord has taken upon himself the mission of "summing up everything in himself." Each of us should furnish the quota that he requires. Christ sums up in himself all of redeemed and faithful humanity, the whole Church, the society of saints. We are included in *him* who offers as well as in *what* is offered.

Jesus the principal Priest, we secondary priests;[1] Jesus the principal Victim, we the secondary victim. But Jesus and ourselves, complete Priest and complete Victim.

The constant attitude of Christ before his Father is that of offering himself and of offering us. The constant attitude of the Christian before Christ is that of offering him, and of offering himself with him.

II

It is plain, then, that in the holy Mass our piety should be inspired by this twofold spirit of offering, the offering of *Jesus* and the offering of *ourselves* with Jesus.

We have already touched on the first when explaining the *regale sacerdotium* of St Peter. The faithful forget this, their eminent dignity, and we often fear to remember it with the excuse of fearing to make a mistake.

There is difference enough between the two priesthoods, that of the Christian and that of the priest, to avoid confusion. Let us not be afraid of pointing out the similarities.

Truths of so fundamental a character and of such vital consequence for the practice of the Christian life and true devotion must not be left in obscurity. We should have far less "sentiment" if all were taught Catholic doctrine in its fulness and following its dominant ideas.

But if the faithful are too forgetful about offering our Lord at Mass, how much more are they forgetful or neglectful of offering *themselves with Jesus?*

[1] In the Petrine sense: the mystical priesthood of all Christians.

We agree readily enough to take the divine Victim on the altar and present him to God, but to take and put one's self on the altar alongside of the Victim, with the intention of sharing his sacrifice, requires no less of a Christian spirit and a great deal more generosity. Yet unless we assist at Mass with these dispositions we have understood it very little.

Just as the only priest at the holy sacrifice is Christ, and then—through the minister officially invested with the sacerdotal character—each one of us in proportion as we "are" Christ; so the only victim in the Mass is still Christ; then in a high degree the priest; and lastly in a lesser degree, and the conclusion is inevitable, each one of us.

The Mass is for us an exercise of *devotion*. We do not make of it what it pre-eminently should be, an exercise of *oblation*. And so complete does our misapprehension sometimes seem that we are put to confusion by the words of those who have most deeply penetrated the meaning of the divine sacrifice, and we are only too ready to think them exaggerated or too mystical.

"O my Saviour," says Fr. Eudes in his *Elevation to Jesus considered as a Host sacrificed to God in the Holy Mass*,[1] "in honour of and in union with the oblation and sacrifice you make of yourself to your Father, I offer myself to you, to be for ever a bleeding host of your will, a victim sacrificed to your glory and to the glory of your Father. Unite me to you in this sense, O good Jesus, draw me to you in your sacrifice, that I may be sacrificed with you and by you yourself. And since the host must be sacrificed, must be slaughtered and consumed by fire, make me to die to myself, to my vices and passions, to all that is displeasing to you: consume me utterly in the sacred fire of your divine love, and so effect it that my whole life may henceforth be a continual sacrifice of praise, glory, and love for your Father and for you."

[1] *Abrégé du royaume de Dieu*, by Fr. Granger, second edition, Amat, 1910, pp. 487, 488.

Such a way of praying takes us away from our usual habits. But are our usual habits good ones ?

Our pious exercises have little by little come to be exclusively those of petitions, and of petitions the entire object of which is our own interests.[1] Prayer is a movement of the soul towards God for adoring him, thanking him, imploring his pardon, and asking for his benefits; we have kept little but the fourth part, and that because it is our own interest. The others concern God; there is no hurry about them.

Of course we have both the right and the duty to ask favours for ourselves of God. But let us remember that in the *Pater*, the model prayer which Christ has left us, the words " give us " only come far on in it, and that the Christian, as desired by the Master, asks first of all " Hallowed be thy Name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done."

We think of ourselves in prayer; yes, certainly. But let us think of Another great Needer, *the Most High*. In his intimate life he asks for nothing. He is infinity. In the external glory that is due to him, what enormous deficits ! What exile greater than that of him who is banished from so many hearts ? How painfully destitute is this Master resisted by human caprices, who from his best friends, the good Christians, too often receives a scanty worship, generally self-interested homage, a love that has neither breadth nor generosity.

Our spiritual horizons must not be bound in such a paltry way. We must broaden our outlook and our hearts. And in particular as to the Mass, let us go to it for what God gives us, but above all that *we may give to God*.

[1] Though happy enough when our *spiritual* interests have the first and most important place.

III

It is for the priest more than for any other, since it is his part to expound the religion of the faithful, to touch the very heart of religion, and, of course, to give himself to living it.

A unique rôle is put upon him in the mission of " offering." It is a high paradox that the overwhelming part of his duty consists in " offering himself."

Immolation through the chastity that separates him from the world, immolation by the continual practice of charity in the world to the point of giving up his life if necessary for his flock, such is the charge laid upon him, and strongly impressed upon him by his bishop on the day he is called to the priesthood. A priest who takes his vocation seriously knows quite well that the mystic sacrifice at the altar is incomplete unless the minister of the altar adds thereto the entire and constant sacrifice of his own self.

Every true priest is like St Lucian. The old Bishop of Nicomedia had been thrown into prison. The Christians managed to get the gates opened by bribery. " We must have communion. . . . Here is everything necessary for the Sacrifice."—" Alas ! there is no altar." Then the saint stretches at full length on the ground; his breast does duty for the table of sacrifice. Will he not be a martyr in a few hours ? And so, with both hands free, he celebrates the holy mysteries.

The priest's heart should resemble an altar stone, and be marked with five crosses and enclose a martyr's relics. St Francis Borgia, in his notes, has summed up his conception of a priest's life in this little red-hearted sentence: " When holding the chalice, I have begged for the chalice."

But if the priest is more especially bound to offer himself sacrificially at each Mass, should not each of the faithful who

takes part in the holy mysteries also bring "*a victim's heart with hands ready to sacrifice*"?[1]

The priest at the *Orate fratres* turns round: "Pray, brethren, that my sacrifice *and yours* . . ." The object of the sacrifice at each Mass is Jesus *and* the priest, *and* us; in other words, Jesus *only*, but Jesus *in his entirety*.

When speaking of a celebrant at the altar, Christians sometimes say, "He says *his* Mass." It is to be feared that in the mind of many that means: "The Mass is something in which we take no active part; it is a matter between the priest and God. *Attend*, yes. *Take part*, that is none of our business."

This is quite false. Formerly each of the faithful brought a part of the very matter of the sacrifice, bread and wine. This custom is now only kept up in the case of a bishop's Consecration Mass, where the newly-elected bishop offers to his consecrator, who sits at the centre of the altar, two candles, two loaves of bread, and a little barrel of wine.

When the hosts began to be made of unleavened bread instead of the ordinary sort, it was difficult to expect the faithful to make their offerings in kind. Their interior oblation, however, was none the less expected. At the Roman Council of 1078, Pope Gregory VII made it the duty of every Christian to offer something to God during holy Mass, and never to come to the sacrifice empty-handed. Wine and wheat—yes, if possible; but a well-disposed heart always.

And history tells us how St Wenceslas of Bohemia counted it an honour personally to sow the wheat and press the wine which were to be used at the altar. Such faith should be an inspiration to us.

There was an ancient custom to the effect that as soon as the consecration had taken place, a deacon, in order to bring

[1] Quoted by Brou, *La Spiritualité de St Ignace*, Appendix, p. 231.

home to the congregation the duty of sharing the offering of Christ in the sacrifice, went to the ambo, and in a loud voice announced to everyone: " Christ's sacrifice and yours."—A candle was lighted, which was put out after the communion of the faithful, and this candle, as regards Jesus Christ present on the altar, took the place of the little lamp in front of the reserved sacrament.

Each of these practices is, in its way, a repetition of an ever-present invitation.

St John, in the Apocalypse, describes heaven: On the altar, the Lamb alive, but as if slain; round about, twenty-four ancients clothed in white robes and crowned with gold; and thousands of angels hymning the sacrifice and triumph of the Lamb.

The magnificent scene envisaged by the Apostle takes place on earth at each Mass if each Christian participates in the sacrifice.

How is it that, after hearing so many Masses and making so many Communions, we have so little *the spirit of sacrifice?* Is it not partly, and maybe principally, because we do not have the right spirit at the *holy Sacrifice?*

He who truly prays his Mass, with true understanding of the mystery which is being unrolled before him, and of *his own* part as victim, insensibly and inevitably comes to *live his Mass*, and to fit into his day's work so much of the sacrifice as is required for—at the very least—never being unfaithful, and at the most for being faithful in the measure of his generosity.

St Angela of Foligno did not understand how it was possible to assist at the holy Sacrifice without being conscious of one's development in the worship of sacrifice. " The Eucharistic Sacrifice," to use her vigorous expression, " stirs the soul."

The *Livre de prières of Mme. Louise de France* has been re-edited with the title *l'Ame chrétienne au sacrifice de la Messe.* Madame Louise was the daughter of Louis XV, and entered a

Carmelite convent to atone for the crimes of her father. This book of prayers had been drawn up at her request by a certain Father Le Chapelain, who died in 1779. Few books on the Mass reflect the theology of sacrifice to the same extent, and one cannot but think that it inspired in a great degree the magnanimous reparations one knows of.[1]

Here is the advice it gives. Never attend holy Mass but in the spirit of sacrifice. From the beginning dedicate yourself by an explicit act of offering. The sacrifice will be " no less universal than that of Jesus Christ in extent, though unequal as regards the victim." Body, sense, spirit, memory, liberty, all will be offered, and an effort always made to behold in the state of the victim on the altar the finished type of this gift. One must go further. Not satisfied with sacrificing to God " all our splendid nothings "—the dressed-up nothing is always nothing—one will make the sacrifice of life itself, and, if God urges us to it, the sacrifice of spiritual consolations.[2] It ends with this beautiful prayer: " I will dare to unite myself to thee, O Lord, to love thee as thou shouldst be loved, and I will borrow from thy divine Heart the sacred fire which must inflame ours."[3]

How Christian that sounds ! So understood, the Mass is very truly the centre of Catholic dogma and asceticism, at once a perfect résumé of the doctrine and a most suggestive reminder of our practical duties.

[1] Read the *Vie de Mme. Louise de France*, by Geoffroy de Grandmaison in *Les Saints* series.

[2] Nothing is more suitable to the creature than a piety devoid of sweetnesses, than a life of mourning and sadness, when he sees his Creator insulted, outraged, dishonoured everywhere by his disciples. I submit to it then, O my God, in reparation for what thou hast to suffer as victim.

[3] Regarding a similar oblation, the *Imitation* gives a better-known formula (Bk. IV, ch. ix).

Chapter III

"HOSTS[1] (VICTIMS) WITH THE HOST (VICTIM)"

I. *The spirit of "abandonment."*
II. *The spirit of "self-sacrifice."*
III. *The moment of the Mass when this twofold spirit should be brought out: "the Communion."*

I

WORDS are not enough. We want deeds. How, in the course of our everyday life, are we to *live the Mass?* In the obscure and petty detail of our everyday existence how are we to realize this vocation of victim inseparable from our very vocation of Christian, a natural continuation, and not at all an eccentric side-issue of the religion of Jesus Christ, the normal outcome of the "spirit of death" already required of us by Baptism, an outcome at once normal and yet so sublime that few, very few, attain to it?

For our Lord the Eucharist is the sacrament of *annihilation*, and the sacrament in which he *gives his entire self*.

According as souls accentuate one or the other of these two points, so they will take the line they prefer, and some will insist on the *renunciation* aspect, while others will be drawn to that of *sacrifice*.

"O Lord Jesus, I no longer wish to choose," says St Chantal; "touch whatever string of my lute thou wilt, for ever and for ever will it give forth this melody only. Yes, Lord Jesus, without 'if,' without 'but,' may thy will be done unreservedly as to my father, children, or all things, and as to myself."

It is well known how her husband was badly wounded while hunting. In the same spirit as his wife he said directly

[1] *Hostie* has the meanings of *Victim* and *Sacrifice*, and of the *Consecrated Host*, more closely interwoven in French than can be shown in the translation.

after the accident: " This blow is from on high. It comes to us from the hand of Providence."

" Give yourself up blindly to Jesus," says another holy soul, " to be his tool, his chattel, which he uses as he likes, without being anxious, without calculating, without doing yourself harm, and you will become an instrument in his divine hands. He lacks instruments entirely given over to his will. He must be able to count on each one, for we are unable to bend our wills, and we prefer our ego to his desire. . . . Let us be hosts beneath which he freely lives."[1]

" I put him on the right," said the holy Curé of Ars, speaking of our Lord under the appearances of the host; " he goes to the right: I place him on the left, he goes to the left."

We aspire to a like abandonment, which is not to be mistaken for sluggishness. Those who have thought about " indifference," as it is described by St Ignatius, know how much activity is included in this absolute submission to the will of God.

" So be it, so be it ! Who would think that such a short phrase were so difficult to learn by heart ?" wrote Louis Veuillot.[2] " But it comes with perseverance, the help of God, and the use of one's intelligence."

And Frederic Ozanam, another great Christian, said, several months before dying: " To-day I reach my fortieth year, and I am stricken with the grave malady of wilfulness. Must I then resign all the favour that thou, my God, hast given me ? Art thou not ready, Lord, to be satisfied with a portion of the sacrifice ? Wouldst thou not accept that of my literary self-esteem, or even of my projected studies ? If I sold half my books to give to the poor, and if, limiting

[1] *Thérèse Durnerin*, by F. Hamez, p. 335. She says also (p. 326), and we shall not mistake her meaning: " The act of perfect abandonment—that is to say, the complete surrender of one's self—to bring about the descent of Jesus Christ into the heart, must have something of the property of the words of consecration."

[2] Louis Veuillot, *Çà et là*, t. ii, p. 494.

myself to a fulfilment of the duties of my situation, I gave up the rest of my life to visiting the needy, to instructing apprentices and soldiers, wouldst thou be satisfied, Lord, and allow me the sweetness of an old age by the side of my wife and to complete the education of my child? Perhaps, my God, this is not in accordance with thy desires? It is I who make these requests. . . . I come, if thou call me! Ah, if these pages be my last, may they be a hymn to thy goodness."

And more recently Mme. Marie-Lucie Vrau, a chosen soul who had also lived a married life, died in 1913. After a retreat with the Children of Mary of St Maur, in March, 1878, she entirely abandoned her whole being to our Lord.

". . . I strip and divest myself at thy hands, so far as in me lies, of my being, of my faculties, of my goods material and spiritual, and I proclaim and acknowledge thee as the Lord and director of my life and actions and the sole proprietor of all that I have or may have.

". . . I refuse to be any longer my own guide. I wish to be guided by thee alone, by thy laws, the events of thy providence, the orders of those in whom thine authority is deposited, the inspirations of thy grace—all this I accept in advance, unreservedly, and without conditions. . . . Be in me, Jesus-Host, the personality, principle, substance, and end, that I may be nothing but thine envelope, thy member, thine instrument, like the humble and pure species of thy sacrament."

And how can we omit to quote, as an invitation to the practice of abandonment, that choice soul, whose journal we have published under the title of *Jusqu'au sommet de l'union divine, Consummata*,[1] who said:

" I live with eyes fixed on him, to be on the lookout for his least desires and to carry them out as soon as possible. Beyond all the graces of prayer, beyond suffering, beyond

[1] Published by *l'Apostolat de la Prière*, 9, Rue Montplaisir, Toulouse.

everything, God is. I am like a child whose mother adorns her with many lovely things, and who, instead of noticing what is given her, only notices the giver. . . ."

It was his ambition to practise literally the two verses of Isaias: "But thou shalt be called My pleasure in her. . . . The Lord hath been well pleased with thee . . . and thy God shall rejoice over thee" (lxii 4, 5).

II

Others have the idea of going, not further, but in a somewhat different direction. It is not so much the aspect of the *Immobility of the Host*[1] that they admire and desire to imitate by an attitude of utter submission, but rather the aspect of the *sovereign activity of our Lord offering himself.* What strikes them above all is the thirst of Jesus for prolonging his sacrifice, his desire to show himself to us at every moment in his rôle as victim. Whence it appears that they cannot be contented with *accepting* all that God is pleased to send us, but that it befits them to *seek*, always within the limits of prudence and obedience, all the possibilities of reproducing in themselves the sacrifice of the divine Head.

The prominent feature of the host is not so much that one does not see Jesus there, but that the hidden Jesus is he of Calvary, the beloved Jesus of the Agony and Golgotha.

In the old missals, at the opening of the Canon, the letter T of the *Te igitur* was not illustrated, as at present, with a picture of Christ on the Cross. The letter, slightly enlarged, merely recalled the two cross-bars of the Crucifixion. Bit by bit artists decorated the initial; the design got bigger, and ended up by representing the whole Calvary scene. Then the subject was thought to deserve a page to itself,

[1] It is quite plain in what sense we use these two words, and what an intimate and continual *élan* of the soul they suppose.

and to-day every complete missal includes at the opening of the Canon a reproduction of the Crucifixion.

In certain souls who are accustomed to go frequently to holy Communion a similar *crescendo* takes place.

From the beginning Christ on the Cross has had his place in their life. But he did not occupy all the page. Little by little they have come to understand that he must be allowed to grow, and the initial of the two arms of the cross has so overgrown everything that the other letters have disappeared. Don't talk to them any more of sacrifice by halves ! They must give up everything.

St Gregory tells us, concerning Bishop Cassius of Narni: " This is how he practised the life of sacrifice. Everything that he had, he gave. And to exterior renunciation he added contrition of heart."

And taking that as his text, St Gregory, for the benefit of the chosen group of faithful who listened to him, cries out: " If there are any who feel the desire to leave all, let them follow the call. If God does not ask that of them, have they not tears, have they not alms, have they not gifts of sacrifices ? All at least of the interior dispositions of true renunciation ?" And he does not hesitate at the expression which some think contemporaneous and of a doubtful asceticism: " to make hosts of ourselves ": *Tunc vere pro nobis erit Deo cum nos ipsos hostiam fecerimus.*"[1] Jesus will be truly our Host before God, if we make hosts of our own selves.

Without going to the length of such sacrifices, which are perhaps beyond our capacity, what opportunities for mortification we could grasp, which we neglect through thoughtlessness, or omit through cowardice.

A host is made of small grains, each one of them insignificant enough. As many are used as are necessary, made of the whitest flour, and then exposed to the heat of a gentle and continuous fire. Our intention of being united

[1] *Dial.*, ch. lix, col. 348, ed. Paris, 1629.

to Jesus immolated stamps these pulverized grains with the mark of the Cross.

At the approach of her brother's first Mass, a poor peasant girl followed the reapers to glean several fine ears of corn. These she took to the nuns of the village, who made a host of them, which the new priest consecrated on the day of his first Mass.

Nothing symbolizes better the enthusiasm with which we should each day try to glean the smallest sacrifices. Each time that we assist at Mass, we should be true sharers of the sacrifice; at the side of the immolated Saviour there should be, in an effective way and palpably, our own immolation, expected by the Master.

To dare to come to the holy sacrifice with nothing to offer is like saying to our Lord: "Immolate yourself, offer yourself; I leave it to you. I am not in this, and as a looker on at your gift, do not count upon me to take part in it."

Well-informed piety speaks another language.

III

At what moment, above all, during the Mass ought we to make the offering of our whole being to our Lord, or, rather, *the blending of the two offerings*, that of Christ and our own?

Obviously at the supremely sacred moment of *holy Communion*. Until that moment we can have, and should have offered—but our offering, as a share in the Saviour's sacrifice, was entirely spiritual and interior.

The moment has come of consecrating externally our intention of participating in the state of Christ as victim. Jesus is about to give himself. He is going to give himself as he is, in the very act of the renewal of his sacrifice. The Jesus who is about to come down into the communicant is Jesus sacrificed, perpetuating his sacrifice on the altar. And he comes in order that with him, no longer spiritually only, but corporally, we may make but one *in the unity of*

the same host that God accepts for his glory and the redemption of the world.

The first consequence of which is, that to come to Mass *without communicating* is to refuse a perfect acceptance of Christ's desires and of the expectation of the Father; properly understood, it is to remain half-way on the road of devotion to the Eucharist. In the early ages of the Church it was unheard-of for one of the faithful to be present at the Eucharistic sacrifice without communicating. Sometimes, indeed, this happened, because the Christian in question had committed some sin for which he deserved to be kept away for a time from the reception of the host. How many Christians impose this punishment upon themselves in our generation for lack of understanding, neglect, or slackness!

A further consequence. The *normal* moment for receiving the sacred host is not before or after, but *during* Mass, just after the priest's Communion. Of course, we must adapt ourselves to circumstances, and if we cannot be present at the sacrifice it is better to communicate out of Mass than not to do so. Moreover, the Church has foreseen the possibility of this, since the ritual has formulas to meet the case. But one could wish that it were the exception. The faithful are only too prone to believe that the object of Communion is to *receive*. . . . And one can receive, it is true, outside of Mass. They are too apt to forget that to communicate is also *to wish to give*, and that since our offering is worthy only *through* and *in Jesus Christ*, the moment of our donation should preferably be that when Jesus Christ offers and gives himself.

And that emphasizes the third consequence. Not only to communicate at each Mass, not only, if one communicates, to do so during Mass, but thirdly, when one communicates, to do so *in the spirit of a victim;* in other words, with the intention of giving our Lord this addition to his sacrifice, which he needs that his Father may be fully glorified and souls more abundantly saved.

Many people approach the holy table as rich heirs would go to the counter of a bank, and receive the host as though it were a dividend warrant for rent. A fortune is there; I partake of it. To give something of oneself in return; no, truly I have no idea of that.

This is to depreciate Communion. To communicate is to make an exchange. To receive; yes, certainly, and what a treasure! . . . But also to give,[1] and to give something which will make of us and of the victim who gives himself *one only*.

And how can we be one with the Victim without ourselves being a "victim"? To receive our Lord without sin, we must be in a state of grace; to receive him most profitably, in a state of sacrifice. Holy Church reminds us of it with singular insistence. The Mass, by its liturgical exteriors, the altar, the ornaments, and still more by its inner essence, reminds us of the Cross. Even before the priest, at the moment of Communion, comes down from the altar to give Jesus to us, he makes a sign of the Cross in the distance in front of all the communicants. Then he comes near, and in front of each one of the faithful he makes the sign of the Cross with the Host before distributing it. Afterwards, if out of Mass, he again blesses the communicants from the altar. The Cross *before*, the Cross *during*, the Cross *after;* and, as is well known, the early Christians, who received our Lord, not on their lips, but in their hands, to give themselves Communion, held out their two palms in the form of a cross, in order to bring home to themselves in a vivid manner the duty of sacrificing themselves.

This action of the early Christians in receiving Jesus should be revived in these days after receiving him. When we return from Communion, let us have our arms crossed or our hands joined; all that as regards the exterior. The only proper interior attitude is that of the open palms and the outstretched arms: "Lord, take . . ."

[1] We have insisted upon this point in *The Ideal of Reparation*, Part II, ch. iii.

" Come, come, flesh of my Saviour," exclaims Bossuet; " burning coal, purify my lips, consume me with the love which hands thee over to death. Come, blood that has been shed by love; flow in my heart, a torrent of flame! O Saviour, this is then thy body, thy body pierced with wounds. I unite myself to them all; it is through them that all thy blood was shed for me. . . . I am crucified to the world, and the world to me. It does not like me; so much the better for me, provided I also do not like it. The rupture is on both sides. Adieu, adieu; I am going away; I am no longer anything, I am no longer for myself. *I live for Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ lives in me.* So should it be; it is the fruit of the Eucharist. Ah! how far am I from it! But I shall only come to it through the Eucharist."

One sees how much Christian lives would be bettered if we knew more how to reflect upon the value of the expression and the true nature of the great Christian sacrament.

How comes it that there are souls who reach the practical contradiction of communicating frequently and giving vent to all their caprices; of assisting at Mass every day and of never having offered to God anything but easy-going and inconsistent lives? With natures that are spontaneously good and without many difficulties, the practice of frequently approaching our Lord seems to them desirable and in good taste. They are not heedless; yet if a reason, a simple pretext, turns up, they will miss Mass and Communion with the greatest ease, and prefer their pillow to their Host.

" One of the things," wrote a great Christian of the seventeenth century, " which causes me the greatest astonishment is that Jesus received in holy Communion works so small a change in me. How is it that his presence does not work miracles? It should be as a grain of seed that produces great things. Jesus ought to do admirable wonders. Jesus ought to make Jesus in us, and there to fashion all his

feelings by his grace, to fill our life with every condition of his own; and yet in me he does nothing, he does not strip me of my human nature to live in the life of Jesus, which makes me greatly fear that I do not make sufficient preparation, and earnestly entreat the mercy of God. . . ."

The Ven. Fr. Libermann was once asked: "What should one do to make a good Communion?"—"Sacrifice yourself."

And the Church's intention is seen in the Post-communion meant to remind us of this great duty. "That having become one host with thee . . . we may be hosts worthy of thee to be eternally offered . . ." etc.

Where shall we get the strength to carry out this programme? From our Communion itself. Jesus gives himself to help us to give ourselves. When he reminds us of the obligation of sacrifice, he brings us strength to devote ourselves to it.

In the offensive of September, 1915, in Champagne, the candidate Guy du Bouillonney, of the 26th battalion of light infantry, priest of Notre Dame de Mortagne, was badly wounded. He was four days on the battlefield.[1]

"All of a sudden," he writes, "I heard someone behind me say, 'Oh, Monsieur l'Abbé, give me absolution! Give me the Sacred Host!' It was a seminarist from the diocese of Nantes, Pierre Jagot. He knew that I carried the blessed Sacrament with me. With some pain I extracted the pyx from my pocket; I took the Sacred Host with my fingers covered in mud. He was too far off for me to give him holy Communion. I placed the Host on his poor shattered leg, which had its artery exposed; I think that a drop of blood tinged the white host. . . . 'My child, give yourself holy Communion.'—'You will tell my mother that I received our Lord before dying?'—He suffered all the afternoon, and died in the evening."

[1] He died of his wounds a few months later. See his *Memoir* by Canon Guesdon, 1919.

That is *to communicate.* A Communion well made supposes *two hosts.* Here we have them. Jesus and he who received him truly became *one.*

Of course we do not maintain that to give Communion its full value it must be made wounded and bleeding on a battlefield. . . . There are degrees in sacrifice, as we have made plain. Heroisms are not all obvious. Bravery is frequently obscure, and there is more than one kind of battlefield. But it is good to have splendid examples here, there, and everywhere. One is all the more ashamed of one's cowardice.

The souls which have understood the Eucharist in a great and true way are consumed with ardour, and feel the desire of casting off the "human," all the evil ego that hinders them; they are fully aware of what it is to be wholly in Jesus Christ.

To live in the surroundings of the altar is nothing else than to live in the atmosphere of sacrifice, and the reception of the Host will inspire one's whole life with the *spirit of the host.*

One sees to what lengths in the long run a wholehearted generosity can lead that gives itself out and out to all the light it finds.

As a matter of fact, the majority of souls that unreservedly give themselves up have learned to do so from being frequently near the chalice and the ciborium.

Will it ever be known how much the desire of being a host has been aroused in souls by this little round white disc of the Host?

To be a host! A host is in the first instance of ground grain. "Lord, take this poor grain. It is thine. Under the millstone of the duty of my condition, of providential suffering and humble voluntary penances which obedience allows me, may I be ground by thee, and may the fire of love make a spotless bread of me."

To be a host! A host, a humble bit of bread which at

the consecration ceases to be bread. " Lord, I wish from now onwards to give up living an earthly life, a life of vanity, greed, and sensuality. I no longer wish that it should be I who dwells within me."

To be a host! A host is a piece of bread become Jesus Christ. " To be no longer myself, Lord, is the negative part of my task. I do not wish to attempt it, except that I may become *thee*. The host is thyself; let thy living host be thyself, too, O Jesus, and thyself only."

BOOK VII

CULMINATION OF OUR INCORPORATION WITH CHRIST JESUS

CHAPTER I

OUR DEATH " IN CHRIST "

I. *Death, a punishment for everyone, is not really " terrible," except to those who are attached to earth.*

II. *The faithful Christian " should have no fear of it," but take advantage of this last means of " union with Christ."*

III. *Let us insist on " the joys of death."*

" BEYOND the life of the senses, beyond the natural life of understanding and will, souls in a state of grace live a life which exceeds the capacities and aspirations of nature—the life, to wit, that, together with Christ, we live mysteriously in God: *vita vestra est abscondita cum Christo in Deo* (Col. iii 3); the life of God in us through Christ and his Spirit; the life of our soul transformed by the Holy Spirit and united to Christ in God. This hidden life is the object of faith for the term of our earthly pilgrimage; but a life destined to open out with Christ into the brightness of glory at the last coming of Christ the Saviour."[1]

These words set forth to perfection the culminating point of our incorporation with Jesus Christ.

To reach heaven with our Lord, we must first rise again with him.

The only reason of our existence on earth is to die with Christ that we may live in him.

[1] Mgr. Mercier, *La vie intérieure, Appel aux âmes sacerdotales*, pp. 302-303.

Before possession, resurrection; before resurrection, and in order to rise, spiritual death as concerns the world. For him who, at the moment of departing this life, has thus cut his cables in advance, temporal *death* will be sweet, *resurrection* joyous, and *heaven* certain.

I

Suarez, on his death-bed, declared: " I could not have believed that it was so sweet to die. . . ."

That is not an echoless exclamation in the history of souls. How many, about to leave the world, have given out a like cry ? All their lives they have laboured in " a handful of earthly soil to make the seed of everlasting paradise spring up." The moment has come for this seed to spring at last out of the ground, and to come into the great sunlight of God. Why weep ?

And, indeed, it has cost something " to make an eternity out of a handful of moulded time." Like the sculptor, we must work without respite and be for ever touching up. A touch is always missing to hit the perfection of the model. Dubois spent seven years correcting the rough wax model which was to be the cast of Joan of Arc. At length, one day, the model finished, and the plaster having reached the desired degree of touching up, he had the wax melted and cast in bronze, and the lovely statue of the Rheims peristyle made its appearance.

Plaster and wax—dead materials. When for each one of us God shatters the impediment that keeps us from " glory," when our cloak of flesh is about to fall off, our sensible nature, struck to the quick, takes fright. Ever since original sin, death is a punishment. It is comprehensible that even the good, who have nothing to fear from divine vengeance, are yet afraid.

But we are too much under the spell of this fear. Good Christians are too fearful of the moment when they must exchange this perishable life for that which never ends.

That men attached to nothing fear the moment of breaking with that nothing is the most natural thing in the world. With all their inclinations bent towards what they must leave, the moment of parting from everything tears them in pieces. But the true disciple of Christ, whose face is always turned towards the divine, when the moment comes for him to reach at length this heaven so ardently desired, cannot but feel his heart flooded with unbounded joy.

The story of the dying Mazarin is well known. Getting up, against doctor's orders, and evading the watchfulness of his servants, he went all alone, shaking with fever, in his slippers and hastily-thrown-on dressing-gown, to take a last look along the galleries of his palace at the wonderful treasures he had gathered together, and from which he felt himself torn away by the hands that do not lose their hold. In front of each picture, each statue, he stopped, trembling and sighing: "So it is true, then? One has to leave all these beautiful things?" Stifled by pain, and dragging himself from the slab of a chest of drawers to the statue of a consul or an emperor, clasping the knees of a god, hanging on to silk carpets, talking familiarly to the objects, fingering the bronze, gold, silver, lovingly looking at and touching everything, "saying au revoir to nothings and crying out good-bye to them all, he continued thus, in an agony of regrets, his almost posthumous visit."

And the mundane chronicler who formerly related this in a fashionable review invited—no doubt without much result—his readers to go in for self-detachment. "What is the good of hanging on to what we must lose? . . . When settling up accounts, we clear a space in our homes and hearts, so that we can put something else there instead: goods of a special sort which are not to be bought or sold, goods of higher worth, which we are sure to take away when the last tap of the hammer knocks them down to us."

To get rid of everything which is not Life, to die before death comes—the real meaning of the word mortification

—is the only way of *taking death unawares*, of treating it as it too often treats us, *sicut fur*, and of depriving it in advance of all that makes it inherently dreadful.[1]

Happy those whose will, whether providentially assisted or not, is detached from the world. When death comes, there is nothing more left to break; all the cables have already been broken. There is nothing to hinder their soaring into freedom.

From his cell in Reinbach, during the Great War, a brave Christian thrown into prison for printing and propagating *L'oiseau de France* in occupied territory,[2] wrote to his wife: "I reason about earthly things as a dead man might; thus I think I have hold of the truth. Do you believe that when we are dead we shall see the things of this world as we see them now? These terrifying visions of the beyond have been granted to me by God here below, so that I may enter into death alive. . . . Do not imagine that suffering has made me a visionary or a mystic. . . . No, I am still the man of realities that you have known. But the old man is slightly purged, and by dint of suffering my eyes have been opened to the light, to the entire light. But there is no merit accruing to me on that account, since the suffering

[1] Nobody has brought out this thought better than Vieyra, the great Portuguese preacher: "Death terrible? . . . Why? For him who only dies when he dies, yes. But he who dies before he dies, laughs at this bugbear of death. What does it matter to me that there is only one death if I can make two? After death there is no remedy, but there is before. Death is a state beyond which we cannot go, but on this side of which we can anticipate. . . . Nothing becomes a masterpiece straight away, how much less a good death, which is the greatest of all things? Nothing is well learned, but by exercise and practice. How does one learn to forge? By forging. So also one knows to die not only by meditating upon death, but by dying. We must then die, once for practice, and again to succeed well." (*Œuvres complètes*, i vol. 2°, *Sermon pour les Cendres*, pp. 404-405.) On the tomb of Duns Scotus, the celebrated theologian, these words were graven: *Semel sepultus bis mortuus*—"Buried once, died twice."

[2] J. Willot, Professor of Pharmacology in the Catholic University of Lille. He died as a result of his imprisonment shortly after the Armistice.

which has brought about the radical change in me is not voluntary, but only accepted."

There is nothing like suffering for reminding us that we are here below as guests: *advena ego sum in terra.*

The land of full possession is not earth. The land "where all is," as Bossuet says, is heaven. How can we stick fast in the mud, when thou dost call us on high, "O Great First Cause," when thou dost invite us to bathe ourselves in thy unity?

"O happy moment, when we shall get out of the shadows and enigmas and see the truth revealed! Let us eagerly hasten there. There lies the end of the journey; there is no more sighing; the work of faith is completed there, when it goes on to give birth to clear vision. O once more, happy moment," adds the great bishop, "*he who desires thee not is not a Christian.*"

"I fall, this mortal edifice is going by bits, but if this house turns upside down and falls on its own ruins, I have a heavenly house where thou dost promise to receive me. . . . O Lord, I run, I fly; I am already transported by my better self. I love to hear the words: 'I will go into the house of the Lord: I am at thy gate, O Jerusalem.'"

II

This is the *Christian* idea of death, the idea that Christ wished to give us of it: *intra in gaudium*, "enter into joy"; already taught us in the Psalm: *in domum Domini ibimus*, "we will go into the house of the Lord"; and by St Paul's: "I desire to be dissolved!"—"Who shall deliver me?"—"*To die* is gain."[1] So thought St Cyprian and

[1] *Cupio dissolvi . . . Quis me liberabit . . . Mori lucrum* (Phil. i 23; Rom. vii 24; Phil. i 21). In 1794, in Brest Gaol a young naval officer, M. de Montecler, at the dawn of his last day, wrote to his mother: "In a week I shall enjoy the happiness of seeing my Creator, of adoring him for ever and singing his

St Ambrose, the first in his *Exortatio ad Martyres*, and in his *De Mortalitate*, where, on the occasion of a persecution and plague, he writes a letter saying: " Death is more to be desired than feared "; the second in his *De bono mortis*, " of the benefit of death "; and so St Teresa, " I die because I cannot die "; and similarly all the saints and great Christians.

" When," wrote the old Bishop Ignatius of Antioch from the depths of his prison—" when shall I enjoy the happiness of being torn to pieces by the savage beasts with which they threaten me? Ah! let them hasten to torment me and kill me, and show me no mercy; I am resolved, if they do not come at me, to go and attack them, and compel them to devour me. Forgive my rapture, little children; I know what is good for me. I now begin to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, no longer wishing for any visible things, and having no other desire than that of finding Jesus Christ. May I be made to undergo burning, crucifixion, and the teeth of savage beasts; may all the tortures that the executioners can think of come down upon me. I am ready for anything, if only I can enjoy Jesus Christ."[1]

And many centuries later the same transports that came from the martyr's prison burst forth from the cell of a Dominican tertiary:

" O eternal Trinity! Thou art a deep sea in which the more I plunge, the more I find thee; and the more I find thee, the more I look for thee. Thou art inexhaustible, and never satest the soul that is filled in thy depths; it always hungers for thee, eternal Trinity; it longs to see thee with Light in thy Light.

" As the hart pants after the living water of the fountains, my soul longs to escape from the dark prison of its body to

praises." De la Gorce, *Le clergé en* 1794 (*Rev. Hebd.*, Nov. 24, 1917, p. 446).—Why do we feel so little that our body is a gaol, and death a liberation?

[1] *Ep. ad Rom.*

see thee in the truth of thy being. How long yet will thy face be hidden from my gaze? Dispel, then, this cloud of my body, O Fire and unfathomable depth of charity; for the understanding of thyself that thou hast given me in thy truth fills me with a violent desire to cast off the burden of my body, and to give my life for the honour and glory of thy name."[1]

This Christian understanding of death, which banishes fear of it, leads the most logical to wish for it, so greatly do they value the greatest of all benefits.

"It is surprising," observes Mgr. Benson, "that our imaginations can still be tormented and oppressed by death; that we are still unintelligent to the point of being accounted morbid if we are in love with death, for it is much more morbid to be frightened of it."[2]

The young war nurse, Geneviève Hennet de Goutel, understood this, and noted down, in order to hearten herself in the way of truth: "It is the dead who live, and the living who do not yet exist."

Purgatory doubtless, purgatory possible, almost certain. . . . But afterwards heaven! Why be hypnotized by the foreground?

"Eternity! An eternity with thee! What happiness, my God!" Such is the cry of all those who see clearly, because they look beyond, and have a true sense of perspective.[3]

[1] St Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue*, ch. clxvii.

[2] *Paradoxes of Catholicism.*—We leave aside a certain neurasthenic distaste for this life, which has nothing in common with the spirit of *cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo* of St Paul. We speak of and for healthy souls.

[3] "I dare to ask thee, Lord," wrote Fr. Perreyve, "for the grace of loving death. . . . What, my God, if thy priests look upon it as an enemy? if they fear it? if they fly from it? if they fear the least suspicion of it, like terrifying and insufferable visions? What, my God, if instead of respecting and loving death as the most solemn of thy feast days and the most worthy sacrifice of our life, we fear it?" (*Médit. sur les Saints Ordres: la Mort*).

Death is saddening to large-hearted souls who love God, not because they have to leave this world and face divine justice, but because they leave it without having worked enough for God or satisfied the requirements of his love.

How inevitable and painful is this conclusion! Eternity determines our capacity for God for ever, and past recall. I shall praise God eternally in exact proportion to the capacity I have acquired on earth for doing so. In heaven I shall occupy the place I have made for myself. The thought that death is the end of my work of growth is in itself enough to cast a gloom over the joy of dying. After death I cannot add one *iota* to my merit, to my power of eternally loving God more. Through it I have entered the land of the fixed, of the definite, of the unchangeable. Nothing will ever change. "Then," said Théodelinde Dubouché,[1] "there will be nothing to do but adore, now there is work to do."

A Carmelite nun was told of her approaching death. "In a few days; the doctor said in a few days!" And she foretasted her happiness. Then: "And yet, it is finished. I shall never love him more! . . . O my Jesus, you know my desires. Do everything in me, since in so short a time I shall be unable to do anything more."[2] Thus the Christian understanding of death should lead one to be daily more generous.

And then, when the moment comes, let us make death yield its maximum to us.

And does it not give us a chance of offering God a last act of perfect love, of total abandonment?—Death's summons will call me. In advance I freely accept it, and when it comes I will give it its fullest meaning. The death of a member of Christ is understood by so few.

[1] Foundress of the *Adoration réparatrice.*
[2] *Marie-Aimée de Jésus*, t. ii, p. 411.

Let us turn to the *Réflexions sur l'Agonie de Jésus-Christ*, by Bossuet.[1]

There we find the famous phrase: "There is nothing in the world greater than Jesus Christ; there is nothing in Jesus Christ greater than his sacrifice; there is nothing in his sacrifice greater than his last sigh, and the precious moment that separated his most holy soul from his adorable body."

When dying, our Lord willed to die completely. His sacrifice is crowned by the death of all that he is.

His physical being dies on the Cross. It remains for his mystical being to die in the succession of all of our individual deaths. His sacrifice, to be complete, requires the two offerings. Moreover, the second offering is only valid by virtue of the first and in so far as it is joined thereto. Our death, which could thus far only be called a punishment, may, thanks to our union with our Lord, thanks to the union of our offering with his, of our last sigh and his, be called a sacrifice.

At the death of our Lord, "all the children of the promise took their place with the Saviour, and, becoming victims, their death, which so far had been but a punishment of sin, through the death of Jesus Christ, was changed into the nature of a sacrifice."

It is finished, cries our Lord, "and the death of my mystical members, being united to mine, will be henceforward but the fulfilment of my plans for them. *It is consummated*, and the consummation of their life, in their last moment, will receive from my death the virtue of a perfect sacrifice yielding homage to all the perfections of divinity."

And in a magnificent passage Bossuet concludes: "There it is, then, that all agonies come to an end. . . . One of the great uses of Jesus Christ's office of sacrifice, to the end of time, will be that of renewing and perpetuating his sacrifice,

[1] In *Doctrine Spirituelle*, 4e ed., p. 243.

not only in the mystery of the divine Eucharist, but also in the death of all true Christians."

This shows a deep insight into the doctrine of our incorporation with Jesus Christ. Do we suffer? It is Jesus Christ who perfects in us his passion. Do we die? It is Jesus Christ making perfect his death.

Our death is valueless apart from the sacrifice of our Lord. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ only has its full meaning as blending our deaths with it.

Just as we living were himself, so we dead are still himself. He gives our death its value. We give his sacrifice its fulness.

"It is in this spirit," adds Bossuet, "that we must receive the holy Viaticum. When Jesus Christ enters the soul, he there offers firstly the sacrifice of himself, since through the sacrament he is there as a victim and represents there that destruction of his natural life which was accomplished on Calvary."—We must be united to him and to his sacrifice at that very moment. So we become in the first instance "priest and victim with him."

But Jesus the victim comes to someone who is also a victim. It is not, then, a question of being sacrificed by proxy, but in reality, and what is forcibly imposed has to be voluntarily accepted. Through sickness God makes us victims We must ourselves be the priest of this victim in offering ourselves completely to God for the fulfilment of all his lovingly destructive designs.

So, concludes Bossuet, "the Christian then uniting himself, not only to the adorable body of Jesus Christ in his sacrament, but also to his spirit and his heart, entering into all his designs by obedience and adherence, wishing to dispose of his being and of his life as the great Sacrificer disposes of them, becomes a priest with him in his death, and completes, in this last moment, the sacrifice to which he had been invited at Baptism, and which he should have continued at every moment of his life."

III

Of what consolation are souls deprived by not having these depths of dogma made known to them. Death is not only terrible, but also precious!

There are both points of view in the liturgy, and nothing is more dramatic than the swinging of the pendulum, which throughout the office of the dead goes from the terror of God's judgements to the joyous hope of full rest: *Dies iræ, dies illa . . .*, and then *Proficiscere . . . requiem.*

But it often happens that the good people who should above all be attached to the joyous aspect of death are principally impressed by the fearful appearance it presents to the sinner. They do not know how to join their *De profundis* with *alleluias*. Of course, in the pulpit or in retreats we have plenty of reasons for being reminded of divine justice. But many excellent people apply to themselves teachings which are meant for others—meant for the sinners who are perhaps there, and for the majority who are not. From this principle they sometimes get hold of the idea of an unrelenting Jehovah, blind to mercy, ready enough to catch his most faithful friends unawares, and hardly making any distinction between sins of weakness and the graver sins of malice.

Add to this the promiscuous reading of dull-witted authors; it is more than enough to trouble one.

Fear is the virtue which is most lacking in the majority of sinners, but expansion is assuredly the virtue which is most wanting in the majority of fervent Christians. The former, then, should lay stress on *Intra in gaudium. . . . Esse cum Christo . . . Requiem æternam.* These words are meant for them. Doubtless perfect purity is necessary for entering the kingdom, and we should be on our guard against the slightest sins. Far be from us any idea of checking for a single moment this elementary principle of the spiritual life.

God is not in the least anxious to be perpetually watching our pettinesses through a telescope. He has something else to do! And those who are given to an exaggerated and enfeebling introspection would offer him a singularly greater glory by making—as often as they go in for their soul-racking examinations—a good act of trustful love.

To find only ourselves at the end of our reflection is necessarily to meet with littleness. Let us put God at the end of our thought; our horizon will be broadened.[1]

And let this God be the true God, the *good* God. Then death will seem, as it really is to the faithful children of God, to the well-beloved brethren of Christ, a coming home to him who has waited long for us and who is "our Father."

"Oh, my good Father," a child asked God, "will the children who are in heaven sleep in a cradle, or in your arms?"—"In my arms," said the Lord.[2]

"When you get to heaven, what will you do?" a Helper of the Holy Souls asked a little foreign boy whom she was preparing for his first Communion.—"I shall fall on God's neck."

There is more truth in this little child's saying than in the notions of many Christians regarding death and God.

At the moment of the "passing" let this consoling thought alone illuminate us, "All around us vanishes like smoke; but I go where all *is* . . ."

"My Saviour, I rejoice that sin is coming to an end in me; I have sinned against thee so much, good Father, good Judge, good Saviour; forgive me. But sin is coming to an end;

[1] Be it understood that we have no intention of proscribing the practice of examination of conscience, recommended by all the masters. Only the calm examination of conscience as the culmination of an act of humility and confidence is a different thing from that of a tortured conscience, which tends to sap the courage on account of the repeated statement of the same paralyzing troubles. It is quite possible to put an inherently excellent weapon to bad use. That is all we mean.

[2] Gratry, *Méditations inédites*, p. 195.

death will not be the end of my life, but of my sin. O death, I love thee for that."

" O death, thou art no longer my death; thou art the beginning of my deliverance. . . .

" I have nothing to fear, unless it is not abandoning myself enough to God through Jesus Christ."[1]

It is told of St Charles Borromeo that passing frequently in his episcopal palace in front of a picture representing death with a scythe, he had the scythe painted out and replaced by a golden key.

" I have searched in vain," wrote a holy Religious, recently dead, " for anything that it would cost me to give up or that might trouble me when I die, and I found in my soul nothing but an impulse towards my good Master and divine Spouse. *Veni Domine Jesu.* I rely on him for everything; I rest always in him. *In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam.*—We shall be truly *ourselves* only in the other life. Men only date their existence from the day of their birth, forgetting the time during which this life was being prepared. It is all this ephemeral life that must count for nothing: death is our real birthday—*dies natalis.*"

And everyone remembers what the young Carmelite of Lisieux said to the chaplain who was assisting her: " Father, I find resignation is only necessary for living . . . it is joy that one experiences in dying." And again, " I am not dying; I am entering into life."[2]

[1] Bossuet, *Réflexions sur l'Agonie.*

[2] *Sœur Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus*, ch. xii, p. 251. St Teresa said much the same thing: " For the soul who is faithful to God, dying seems to me the simplest thing in the world, as in one moment it finds itself free of prison, and brought to eternal rest" (*Vie par elle-meme*, ed. Bouix, ch. xxxviii, p. 538). And with what a full heart did she welcome the angel of deliverance: " At length, Lord, has the moment of our meeting come, for which I have waited so long !"

Chapter II

OUR RESURRECTION " IN CHRIST "

I. *United to Jesus Christ in his death, we are " sharers with him in his resurrection."*
II. *The strength and happiness of Christian " hope."*

I

THE commandments of God and duties of one's state require such a detachment from creatures as serves to lighten the last partings and directly prepare the work of the resurrection.

Our Lord said that to die with him is to be certain of living one day with him: *Pati* is a condition of *Gloria*— One must suffer in order to enter into glory.

" The resurrection of Jesus is not a supernatural luxury held up to the admiration of the elect, nor a simple reward of their merits, nor only the support of our faith and the security of our hope; it is an essential complement, an integral part of redemption itself."[1]

Thus St Paul established the *fact* of the resurrection, then the *why* and the *how*.

Leaving aside the fact and the how, what has he to say of the why ? We shall rise again because Christ rose again.

Here we have the great dominating idea of the Apostle: our strict solidarity with Christ. We are him. He rose again, therefore we shall rise again, or, rather, we have risen with him. He has merited grace for us, and guaranteed us the way of rising again with him.

United to Adam, we share the lot of Adam, and, like him, are condemned to die. United to the new Adam, we share the lot of the new Adam, and, like him, we are called to resurrection, to live for ever.

The curious reasoning of St Paul in the fifteenth chapter

[1] Prat, *St Paul*, t. ii, p. 304.

of the first book of Corinthians is well known. Some refused to believe in the dogma of the resurrection of the flesh.

But, says the Apostle to them, " if there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen again."—That is verse 13. . . . Then verse 16: " If the dead rise not again, Christ is not risen again. . . ." But in verses 20 and 22 he continues: " Christ is risen from the dead, . . . the firstfruits of them that sleep. . . . As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."

Resuming the same line of thought, he says to the Colossians: " When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory."[1]

" Paul never drew a hard-and-fast line between grace and glory, which is the slow but sure culmination of it. Whoever is grafted on Christ is thereby associated with his immortal and glorified life."[2]

And so strong is the Apostle in his fine certitude that he exclaims, challenging and contemptuous: " O death, where is thy victory ? O death, where is thy sting ?"

The triumph of Christ over death is not individual, but collective: the triumph of the whole body of the Church, of which Christ is the head. Already, by dying, Christ became our substitute, our representative, the second Adam; he contained all his community in himself, so that for St Paul and the whole Church all humanity is found to be dying at the same time as Jesus its Head on the cross.

Likewise, in rising from the dead, Christ is our substitute, our representative. The parallel is complete. As the second Adam, he contained all his community in himself, so that for St Paul and the whole Church all humanity rises again with Jesus its Head on Easter morning. And we have recalled how the ancient Christian custom of baptizing only on Holy Saturday night obviously showed the mingling, perhaps one might say the identification, of the

[1] Col. iii 4. [2] Prat, t. ii, p. 503.

two departures from the tomb—that of the Christians from the baptistery, that of Christ from the crypt of Joseph of Arimathea.

By *right* the death of the complete Christ—*Christus totus*—took place on Calvary; in *fact* it has to be realized in the life of each Christian along the ages.

So also by *right* the resurrection of Christ with his mystical body took place on Easter morning; in *fact* it takes place at each Christian's entry into glory.

At the siege of Constantine, Lamoricière, by way of encouraging his men, threw his commander's baton into the ditch in front of the breach made in the wall, and rushed forward; after him all his men followed.

Jesus, in order to conquer heaven for us, has done the same. He has thrown his Cross into the hinterland: he who loves me, let him follow me. More powerful than the angel of his tomb, he has turned aside the stone which blocks our entrance into Life. By him all tombs are burst open, and on the appointed day, at his word, when the trumpet shall sound: the dead shall arise—the phrase is St Paul's: *surgent mortui;* we shall have but to follow him, and the victory will be ours.

United to him in grace, henceforth we shall be united in glory. "The beginning already made a beautiful unity; the consummation will but make it closer. . . . If this great captain has conquered," continues Bossuet, "he has done so for us as well as for himself, and, I venture to say, more for us than for himself; I sanctify myself for them, *Pro eis sanctifico meipsum.*" And, taking the priestly prayer of Jesus, he thus paraphrases St John's verses[1]: "This was thy purpose in sending me: to consummate all in one. This is why, *Pater quos dedisti*, Father, they whom thou hast given me, not alone as my companions and brothers, but as my members: *volo*, 'I will'; ah! they are my members; if thou leave me free to dispose of myself,

[1] Ch. xvii 23 *et seq.*

so should'st thou also of my members: *volo ut ubi sum ego, et illi sint*, 'I will that where I am they also may be.' If I am in glory, they must be there also: *mecum, mecum*, 'with me, one with me'; that they may know the glory which thou hast given me, that they may know it in themselves, and that by its extension and its communication they may see its greatness: *quam dedisti mihi:* 'it is from thee that I hold it, my Father.' This is why, 'because thou didst love me before the creation of the world': *quia tu me dilexisti a constitutione mundi;* thou hast given it to me entirely, with power of self-communication and self-expansion, 'so that where I am they may also be there with me, that they may see the glory which thou hast given me': *ut ubi ego sum, et illi sint mecum, ut videant claritatem meam quam dedisti mihi:* 'I sacrifice myself for them and for their sins': *Ego pro eis sanctifico meipsum.* They were victims due to thine anger; I put myself in their place, *pro eis*, 'for them,' that they may be holy and consecrated to thy Majesty at the same time that I devote and sacrifice myself. . . .

" Father, I am in them; thy love for me must be in them: '*Dilectio qua dilexisti me in ipsis sit, et ego in eis*, and the joy and the glory also that thou art to give me must be in them, that my joy in them may be full': *ut habeant gloriam impletam in semetipsis. Mea omnia tua sunt et tua mea sunt: et ego clarificatus sum in eis*, 'All that is mine is thine, and all that is thine is mine, and I am glorified in them. . . .'"[1]

In his *Méditations sur l'Évangile*, Bossuet again takes up the same idea. We could not do better than follow such a master on such a subject, and one may say of him what he says of our Lord: " He always returns to this unity."

[1] 2° *Sermon pour la Toussaint*, 2^e^ p^t^. (Ed. Garnier, 1872, t. i, pp. 33, 34.)

II

And " why always remind us of such a sublime mystery ?"

" Because it is the entire source of our happiness." The source of our happiness is that this Son whom God loves " should have been made man, so that being but one and the same person with the man who is united to him, he loves this all as his Son; whence it follows that, distributing among men who are his members the same love that he has for his Son, the love he has for us is an extension and an overflow of that which from all eternity he bears towards his only Son."[1]

When we spoke of Christian renunciation, of the self-denial necessary for him who presumes to be a member of Jesus Christ, we pointed out that renunciation in no wise means a gloomy life; nor self-denial, sadness.

On the contrary, the Christian in a state of grace must be of a joyful nature because of all that he *has;* but how much more because of all he *hopes for?* If already his road is so full of true happiness, what will it be at the end ?

Of course, this end sometimes does seem to be lost in the distance. On certain days the cross is very heavy. For a mere nothing one throws off the burden.—I can do no more ! My strength fails me.

Courage, child: thou art not alone. Fix thine eyes on Christ. . . . Tradition has it that a woman of Bethania, hearing too late of the Master's arrest, arrived in Jerusalem when our Lord was already on top of Calvary. . . . She saw blood on the stones by the way. " Blood ! The Master has gone that way !" She followed the red track. At the end of it she found the Saviour on the Cross.—There is a trail of suffering on thy route. The Master has crossed thy path. Go on courageously.

It will be hard.

[1] 3ᵉ Partie, *Dernier sermon du Sauveur*, lxi et lxiiᵉ jours.

He is in front. Thou hast but to follow. And if thou faintest from time to time, think on Christ falling three times. With him, take up again thy cross of affliction. At the end thou wilt see him on the two cross-beams that stand out against the horizon. . . . All and more than thou canst endure he has suffered before thee.

Even with him suffering terrifies me.

He willed to feel thus in his last agony. Be worthy of him. Wait three days. . . . They have taken him down from the Cross and carried him to the tomb. Go there; it is quite close. It is not far from the place of suffering to the place of resurrection. Christian, thou art but one with Christ. Thou sufferest now; it is he who suffers through thee. Patience! The end will come. Easter is already at hand.

I can believe it, but the price is a heavy one.

You talk like the poor child who was being stifled by an incurable disease, and to whom they spoke of the joys of resurrection. But the saints are against you. Ask them if they are sorry for having suffered too much.

During the time that they were on earth I imagine that they were like that captain of engineers at Eparges, an old Alsatian of Saverne, who, in the midst of the upheavals of the mines, determined to settle down in that desolate nook and repair each sector as it was destroyed. "You must have had some frightful times!" "Yes, of course; but each time I stuck the mattock in I said to myself, 'We are on the way to Saverne.'"[1]

A Christian has been defined as one *who waits*. A signifi-

[1] Madelin: *La Chemin de la Victoire*, i, pp. 8, 9. This memory of the campaign calls another to mind, that of Yves de Joannis, pupil at the French Seminary at Rome. While corporal of artillery, he received a bullet in the chest on September 8, 1914. He was taken to the rear on a frantically jolting ambulance. His mother hastened to the ambulance and warned him that as he was seriously wounded he had better receive Extreme Unction. "What a surprise! Can it be true, that this is all I have to suffer to go home to God?"

cant definition suggestive of the elevating and noble joy which St Paul attributed to hope.

Obviously if our hope is in vain, if there is no resurrection, we are the most unhappy of men. To have wagered all on an eternity which passeth not away, to sacrifice the merely transient in order to gain it, and in the long run to find ourselves deceived, this is to be a victim twice over.

But this admission is only pretence. How, resumes the Apostle, should our hope be vain? So little vain is it that it has already begun. The entire Christ is Head and Body. But the Head, the chief, has risen. Hence our assurance for the Body. If we are living members, the logic of our incorporation with Christ necessarily implies our resurrection.[1] It is a *future* certain and guaranteed, because it is already a *past* that leaves no doubt: *Deus convivificavit nos in Christo . . . et conresuscitavit et consedere fecit in cœlestibus in Christo Jesu*, "God hath quickened us together in Christ" —*has* quickened, and not *will* quicken us—"*has* raised us up together, *has* made us sit together in the heavenly places,"[2] all that *in the past*, as it were a series of acts *already done* from the fact that the cause is implied and carries in itself (unless hindered by our bad will) all the effects that it must produce.

Our hope, then, is not vain. But if it is not vain, what is there to guarantee the issue but the sacrifice of all that is vain? We are assured a future of happiness. What does tribulation matter? There is no connection between temporary suffering and eternal glory.[3] Or, rather, there is

[1] See how St Thomas argues: The members must conform to the head. Now Christ, our chief, is living, living for all time both in body and soul, for Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more (Rom. vi 9). Consequently, those who are members of Christ, also will live in body and soul, and therefore the resurrection of the flesh is necessary (Summ. III, Q. lxv, Art. 1). And as regards the question in general, see Q. lxv to lxxi.

[2] Eph. ii 4-6.

[3] "For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us" (Rom. viii 18).

"a connection," for it is precisely with this temporary suffering that I know that I am buying everlasting glory.

He who has made heaven has also made the road to heaven, only the way and the end are not at all alike. There above is pure delight. But to get there needs sweat and blood, long efforts and untiring patience.

One day St John was allowed to contemplate the blessed in glory. And one of them, observing doubtless the astonishment of the Apostle, asked him: "These that are clothed in white robes, who are they? And whence came they? Knowest thou?" On his avowing ignorance he was told, "These are they who are come out of *great tribulation.*"

To come out of tribulation. This is the best title, the most powerful introduction. The more one has suffered for Christ, the greater right has one to be close to the throne of God and among those who serve him day and night in the sanctuary of his glory.[1]

Because Christ taught resignation, his doctrine has been accused of pessimism.

Pessimism, the religion which makes a dogma of the *resurrection*, a theological virtue of *hope*, and for which the gates of death are a triumphal arch! A notable accusation, which plain common sense compels us to turn against those whose entire end of existence is solely in this poor life, and whose ready-made paradises are miserable *ersatz*, hollow and incredible makeshifts.

Pessimism, the religion which doubtless does not suppress suffering, but alone can give it a meaning, guarantee it an end, and promise it a reward? What a palpable absurdity!

"I shall go to prepare a place for you," said our Lord on the eve of Holy Thursday; "and if I shall go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am, you also may be. And whither I go you

[1] Apoc. vii 13-16.

know, and the way you know. . . . These things have I spoken to you, that my joy may be in you and your joy may be filled."[1] Our Lord did not lie.

It is impossible for a *true* Christian not to be the happiest of men; and the truer Christian he is, the more he knows and tastes the peace of God, for the more he lives in absolute trust. Our joy is in proportion to our faith.

Let us, then, strengthen our hope by intensifying our faith. We are not on earth to remain here, but to get out of it. Our lives here below are directed towards an end; let us never forget it.

When on the day of the ascension our Lord rose from the earth, a more or less reliable tradition has it that a mark remained on the rock, the mark of the sandals, the last human vestige of Christ here below. This mark on the stone would be a kind of arrow pointing the way—"To ascend to God.'

But we have much better signs than these.

In the Sahara, for fear of the wind which shifts the dunes, frequently changes the contour, and covers over the paths, in order to keep his trail, the traveller sometimes draws the necessary signs on bits of paper, which he distributes in likely spots, sticking them between two stones in the most visible places.—So that man may not lose his way on earth, God has distributed verses of his Gospel—verses of his "Good News." They are apparent enough for anyone to come across them, and there are interpreters to explain the right meaning of them. We have only to keep to the track. It is absolutely safe, and any other path leads us astray. That one, and that one alone, leads to the life which is wholly Life.

John xiv 3-5, xv 11.

Chapter III

OUR LIFE "IN CHRIST" IN HEAVEN

I. *What the heaven of "glory" is.*
II. *By grace we already have a kind of "heaven on earth."*

I

ARY SCHEFFER'S picture in the Louvre of St Augustine and St Monica gazing at heaven has been frequently reproduced. Who has not mentally followed the direction of their gaze, and sought to rend the veil which hides God and God's house from us?

One day in Patmos, while meditating in close union with God, John saw this dwelling-place of the saints; and the Apocalypse attempts to describe the marvels seen.

St Paul also had contemplated heaven. . . . Like John, he had at least found out something about it. . . . And doubtless his bold pen will pierce the cloud for us. . . .

Alas! when the most ordinary object is in question, it seems so difficult to transfer the image of it to those who have not come anywhere near it!

The loveliest lines are those that no one writes.

The higher the reality goes, the more it escapes our power of describing it. The more spiritual, the greater the difficulty. Hence the inability of the mystics to tell us what they taste and see.

What can they tell us? They can explain to us: "the breadth, and length, and height, and depth."—*Ut sciatis quæ sit latitudo, longitudo, sublimitas et profundum.*[1] This surveyor's phraseology seems like the stammering of a child. And we are no further than we were before. *Nec oculus vidit, nec auris audivit, nec lingua valet dicere.*[2] The eyes, the ears, the tongue, all fail . . . it is only too obvious that nothing

[1] Eph. iii 18. [2] 1 Cor. ii 9.

has been said. There is only one element of appreciation, and that altogether negative.

When Bernadette returns after seeing the Immaculate, the sun seemed "quite black" to her.[1] Paul contemplated the majesty of God, and resumed contact with ordinary things: it all seemed like dung: *stercora.*

But if it is difficult to *imagine* the happiness of heaven, the facts of *faith* are ours, that we may estimate its worth.

Firstly, heaven is an inheritance. Since we are the adopted of the Father, since we have been received into the Father's family, rather since we have become of the Father's family, we have a right to the heritage of the Father: *Pater da mihi portionem substantiæ meæ*,[2] "Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me!"

He who dies in a state of grace can no longer recite the whole Pater. The first aspirations alone hold good, because, like God, they are everlasting: "Father, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done!" But as for the rest of it, we have no more need to ask for bread or help against temptation. It is still "Father, give us!" but it is the request of the son who has come to the end of his course: "Give us the promised inheritance. . . ." And it is God who pronounces the *Amen.* Heaven consists in God's reply to this demand of his children: "My well-beloved, *filioli*, so let it be. . . . Yes, I wish it. *Amen. Amen.*"

This, then, is the hope of our vocation as Christians, *spes vocationis*, and the richness of the glory of our inheritance: *divitiæ gloriæ hæreditatis*, the richness of glory which returns to us through the operation of the might of the power of God in Jesus Christ.[3]

[1] One day a traveller in textiles showed her some samples of white, and beginning with the least fresh and bright, asked her: "Was the robe of the blessed Virgin white like this?" "Oh, much whiter." "Like this, then?" "Oh, much, much whiter!" It was whiter than all earthly whiteness.

[2] Luke xv 12.

[3] Eph. i 17-20.

The "Wedding of the Lamb" of the brothers Van Eyck in the Church of Saint-Bavon at Ghent represents—at what a distance, but with wonderful general perfection and delicacy of detail—the Christian conception of glory. Christ triumphs, but not alone. We are all of us summoned to share his triumph. Risen from the dead with him, we shall live with him: *convivificavit.* Called to share his life, we are admitted to sit on the throne with him, *consedere cum Christo.* And such is the fruit of God's immeasurable bounty towards us in Christ—*in bonitate super nos in Christo.*[1]

A dying soldier said: "I am going home." Heaven is indeed our home, since we are but one with Jesus, and he necessarily lives in heaven. Up above we are "at home," because we are "in him." We are heirs of God only because we are co-heirs of Jesus Christ.[2]

How constantly we come across the same curiously characteristic line of argument in the Fathers. We are "in Christ." "Now Christ," says St John Damascene, "is in heaven, and since we are but one with him, we are already in heaven: *Jam sumus in cœlo, quatenus sumus in Christo.*" And St Augustine: "It is in him that we are in heaven, not as yet in our own persons, but in his: *sedere nos dixit in cœlestibus, nondum in nobis, sed jam in illo.* We through our love are already with him in eternal felicity. He through his love dwells on earth with us until there be no more earth."[3]—With that instinct for summing up in a phrase which is a secret of his genius, the great Bishop of Hippo put all the happiness of heaven in this key-word: *Habitabimus et habitabimur.* We shall live fully in God; God will live fully in us.

[1] Eph. ii 5-7. We intentionally put Latin additions in the text to bring out and exemplify the frequence of St Paul's use of the expression "in Christo."

[2] *Hæredes quidem Dei, cohæredes autem Christi* (Rom. viii 17).

[3] *Nos caritate, cum Capite nostro sumus in cœlo in æternum . . . Ipse nobiscum est in terra usque ad consummationem sæculi* (*Enarr.* ii in Ps. xxvi 11).

While on earth we only reach God through physical manifestations of his beauty, his powers, and his truth; in heaven our possession of him will be without intermediary.

The inferential knowledge of the Master through and in his works will be at an end. We shall behold what we believe —God in his essence and in the Trinity of Persons, all God—without, however, being able to penetrate all of God; we should not then be any longer "made in the image of God," we should be God. These "Three" so mysteriously present in us, and so imperceptible, so far beyond our reach, at once so near and so far from us, so directly united to us, and to whom we so hardly unite ourselves; in short, without further obstacle we shall see them! Helped by this light of glory, which will be in heaven what grace is on earth, we should be of those who see him face to face. We shall see God, and all the rest in him. And our power of seeing in heaven will be proportionate to our holiness here below. We shall see in heaven just as we have willed to desire him on earth.

And not only shall we see, but we shall love also. Firm in love, we shall love the "Three" with the power of loving which may have been crowded into our last moment. And all that we love other than God—for we shall not give up loving what we have legitimately cared for on earth—we shall love in him.

And the love springing out of this vision will give birth to a boundless joy, *gaudium Domini*, a joy such as nothing here below can give us any idea of. If already on earth the divine joys exceed all feeling; if, when it pleases God to join a saintly soul to himself in the highest sense possible on earth, this soul, under the sway of the divine embrace, is driven to cry out, like Francis Xavier, in exultation, "Stop, Lord, stop"; if, as the great mystics tell us, the divine contacts in a state of union are so sublime that the soul so embraced has no longer anything of itself, and without yet being in heaven is

no longer on earth;[1] what are we to say of his unhindered possession of God, bursting all barriers and flooding all our powers; what of the joys of heaven—the joy of beauty unveiled, joy of truth perceived without error or limit, joy of seizing the good without further possibility of failure? And all of it—vision, love, and joy—existing in one single, uninterrupted, eternal action!

And all that is ours, not as something outside of us—*habitabimus*, we shall dwell—but as something in us—*habitabimur*, God will dwell in us.

As on earth the great secret of the Christian life is the taking possession by grace of God who dwells in the depths of us, so in heaven the great secret of the life triumphant will be our taking possession by glory of God, expanding the presence which he has chosen to give himself within us by grace.

Concerning God, possessed by grace, Augustine said: *Intimo meo intimior*, "he is closer to me than myself." That will be true in heaven, or, rather, it will take on an infinitely more splendid aspect of truth. Each inward dwelling of the soul will be but the brightness of the reflection of God. *Habitabimur.* God will dwell in us, no longer as on earth, as a dimly magnificent presence—but because of its obscurity so afflicting to those who attempt to pierce the mystery—but rather as a presence bright, clear, and dazzling. On earth the thickly veiled body acts as a screen. It is the wall that hides my God from me. God is the God of my heart, but my body prevents me from reaching my heart. In heaven the body, resurrected, glorious, will be no longer an obstacle, but a transparent vehicle. I shall see the great Living One who dwells in me. *Habitabimur . . . et videbimus.*

Obviously, after all these stammerings we must confess that we have said nothing. . . . *Nec lingua valet dicere.*

[1] See, for example, in St John of the Cross: *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book II, ch. xxvi.

One minute of true prayer says a great deal more than a long chapter. Grace, and above all glory, should only be studied on one's knees.

II

One idea, at least, we should like to insist upon, because it strikes us as somewhat unfamiliar to many Christians, though of vital importance. It is the deep, *essential* resemblance between the supernatural lives in heaven and on earth, and it is an idea that deprives glory of none of its beauty, while it particularly increases the value of grace.

Doubtless a number of accidental differences exist between grace and glory. They are obvious at first sight, and no one can fail to have noticed them. But precisely because they are obvious they spoil the perspective, and expose the background, the most important part of the picture, to being left in the shadow. By grace, as by glory, the good given is the same: it is God, and God is in both cases possessed as a friend. The only difference is in the way of possession.

We remarked just now of heaven: *habitabimus et habitabimur*. We shall dwell with God, and God will dwell in us. Of these two verbs, only the second is true on earth. We do not yet dwell in the Father's abode, except in hope; but God already dwells in us, and that is just where grace comes in. *Habitabimur*, or let us say for the present *habitamur*. Doubtless—and we must repeat it—not an indwelling accompanied by clear vision and perfect joy, but of a certain presence strengthened by faith: " If anyone love me, we will come—not to go away again—but we will come and remain." We are the temples of God. In heaven temples of glory, here temples of mire, but temples with both sides: on both sides tabernacles; on both sides houses of God: *habitabimur* or *habitamur*. God dwells in us now.

" The life of grace and that of glory," said Bossuet on a feast of All Saints to the faithful, " are identical, the only

difference between them being that of youth and the vigour of age."

In this life we have the germ; in heaven the flower in full bloom. In this life possession in the shade; in heaven in the light. In this life we look at God, but without seeing him; in heaven we are face to face with God. We are already saved, and only await the consummation of our salvation. "You have received the spirit of adoption," says St Paul; and almost immediately he adds: "We mourn, awaiting the adoption"; or, again, "We are saved, yes—but in hope."[1] That is to say, in past time extending its dominion over our present and future, on condition, however, that this present and future be a present and future "in Christ Jesus."

St John talks in the same sense. He mixes past and future: "He has *promised* us life eternal. He has *given* us life eternal."[2]

The fire is alight, only a little ash hides it.

When the wind of the last trump blows on these ashes, the fire will burst into flame. We *have*, but, let us add, we *shall have*. If there is such a difference between one degree of glory and another, what will there be between grace and glory!

On earth and in heaven, the same life. We have dwelt on this insistently.

On earth, faith; in heaven, vision. On earth, travel; in heaven, arrival. On earth, hope; in heaven, possession. On earth, shadows; in heaven, light. On earth, part; in heaven, fulness. On earth, the movable; in heaven, the fixed. On earth, striving; in heaven, perfection. On earth, struggle; in heaven, triumph. On earth, the future uncertain; in heaven, the future assured.

We shall love what we already do love—but unhindered.

Already we have God in us, but instead of merely believing it, we shall see him. We shall behold our God, and in us as he is in himself.

[1] Rom. v 15-25. [2] 1 John ii 25 and vi 1.

These differences notwithstanding, I repeat that we must not in this respect lay undue stress on the imperfections of our present state. Believing is nearer seeing than we think. To expect is already to have, when it is a question of a securely promised favour. To love, whether on earth or in heaven, is always to love.

Beyond doubt, if we are faithful, we have, not yet the vision, but the certainty of seeing him. Hope's object is not the desire to *have* God—by grace I already *have* him—only the desire to *see* him.

The supreme wretchedness of earth is not so much failure to *see*. We *have;* what does the rest matter? It is in that we may lose what we have; and the great joy of heaven is not perhaps vision only, but the certainty that the blessing we have is ours for ever, and never to be lost.

Our conclusions are inevitable, and logical: they are reducible to two:

To encourage ourselves with the thought of what *will be;*

To comfort ourselves with the thought of what already *is*.

Or, if you will, to stimulate ourselves with the thought of *heaven to come*, and to find our joy in the thought of *present heaven*. Later it will be so different. Now it is substantially so similar.

And first, put eternal hope into your life. Amidst the nothings that pass, do not let yourselves be swallowed up by nothingness. Sometimes know and reflect that there is something else: everything that lasts. Refuse to be taken up so much with earthly things that you are never concerned with heaven. So many people are like the soldier Duke of Alba at the battle of Wittenberg, who, after fighting for nine hours, was asked by the King of France, if it were true, as some asserted, that the sun stood still for a moment during the fight. "Sire," he replied, "I have had so much to do in this day's work on earth that I have had no time to look at heaven!"

Let us put aside a few minutes or more each day, if possible, for heavenly contemplation. It is so good, or in any case useful, at certain hours "to escape from the prison of contingencies," and in time to live some minutes of eternity.

Yet more. The heavenly life must not only be thought of a future hope. It must be regarded as a very present living fact. Indeed, if I am in a state of grace, have I not already heaven on earth, since "heaven is God, and God is in my soul"?

Looked at thus—and there is no other way of seeing it in its true light—how pleasant does "our little planet of redemption" become, and who would like to see it as nothing but a valley of tears?

For him who knows how to see and how to desire, everything is heaven—heaven of grace or heaven of glory.

And if we consider that it depends on ourselves to prepare the beauty of the heaven of glory in our heaven here below, what unsuspected grandeur, what legitimate joy—not only legitimate, but obligatory.

Later on I shall be a wonderful being, and now I have at hand all that I need to make me as wonderful as I could desire: *Cœlum es et in cœlum ibis*—"Made for heaven, thou art in heaven already."[1]

We are surrounded with Paradise. One understands the atmosphere of light thrown around the martyrs and saints by the early Christians. Every soul in grace is surrounded by an invisible halo. We do not see it, but God does. God ignores him who lacks this stamp of the just man. *Nescio vos.* Only those who are heavenly will go to heaven.

St Augustine, commenting the text of the Apostle: *Quod nec oculus vidit*, "what eye has not seen," etc., gave to the Christians who were greedily listening to him this last subject for reflection: "Heaven is what God prepares for those who love him. Do you wish to know more? Ask

[1] St Augustine.

him who already dwells in you. *Illum interrogate, qui cœpit in vobis habitare.*"[1]

And on this note let us finish. He will form for himself the highest, most comprehensive, and justest idea of the heaven of glory, who strives to dwell to the utmost of his power in the heaven of his soul, and there to consult him who lives in him. Our " Fatherland " we carry within us, since in us God dwells. Heaven will not be anything else; it will be otherwise. To live within is already to live on earth *in excelsis.*

[1] *Serm.* cccxxxi, *In natali martyrum*, 3, 4.

CONCLUSION

AT the present time, many Christians are more and more eager for *enlightened* piety.

They not only wish to love much. They aim at a better knowledge of the object of their love.

* * * * *

It is for them that this book is written.

May God grant that these pages fall not short of their intent.

The Apostle St Paul, whose witness we would invoke for the last time, says: *Loquimur Dei sapientiam in mysterio quæ abscondita est*—"We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden." May we have made "the hidden mystery" a little better known.

So far as this result goes, we have far less confidence in any words of ours than in the attentive and prayerful meditation of the individual reader.

Curiosity and study alone are not enough to penetrate Jesus Christ—*above all*, the Christ so closely interwoven with our own life, who is revealed to us by the dogma of the mystical body. Though so close to us, Christ evades him who does not often ask: "Master, where dwellest thou?"

* * * * *

As may be readily perceived, this study of the relationship of *each* Christian *with Jesus Christ*, through our *individual* incorporation with the Saviour, invites—as we pointed out

at the beginning—a parallel work on the *mutual* relation between *all* Christians, through their *common* incorporation with Jesus Christ.

The synthesis will then be complete.

This parallel work is in progress. May our Lord vouchsafe to bless it and help us finish it.

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In Christ Jesus.

TITLE

Peter Addison (Tr.). 2nd. Edition.

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